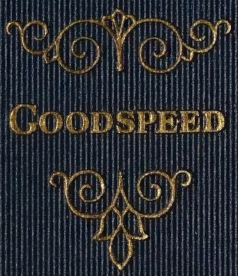
The Making of The English New Testament



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THE MAKING OF THE ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT

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THE MAKING *of the* ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT

By

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IN MEMORIAM
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PREFACE

THE four-hundredth anniversary of the first publication of the New Testament in English is an appropriate time to review the story of the English New Testament. These four centuries have not been uneventful as far as it is concerned, and we may well survey the efforts that they have witnessed to improve the English form of the New Testament, and the events that have led to these efforts. These pages are written in the hope that such a survey may contribute to a better understanding of the history of the English New Testament, about which there is now such widespread interest, and yet such widespread ignorance.

The past century has witnessed the transformation of industry, communication, and transportation, of medicine and the whole field of science, through modern discovery and invention. Many people mistakenly suppose that such advances have been limited to material progress. But as a matter of fact, the recent advances in literary and archaeological fields have been hardly less marked. The English New Testament in particular has not been outside this onward

movement, but has profited greatly by new discoveries and by scientific advances. What these advances and discoveries have been and how they have affected the English form of the New Testament is a story which has not been fully written.

Readers of the New Testament now find new English versions of it springing up every year, and ask the reason for their appearance. This book is an effort to answer that question and to trace the progress of the English New Testament from its beginning in the hands of William Tyndale, four hundred years ago, until today.

EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
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I

THE FIRST ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT

FOUR hundred years ago, the Bible of England was the Latin Vulgate. Few men could read it, and fewer women. For knowledge of it ordinary people were dependent upon the clergy, who were themselves none too well acquainted with its meaning. It was at such a time that a young Oxford man, William Tyndale, undertook the task of making a translation of the New Testament directly from the original Greek into the common English of his day, and thus laid the foundation of the English Bible.

The disfavor with which the medieval church regarded the circulation of the Bible among the people had found expression in a regulation of the Council of Toulouse, passed in 1229 A.D., that no layman should be allowed to have any book of the Bible, especially in a translation, except perhaps the Psalter. In the face of such statutes, John Wyclif, once master of Balliol College, Oxford, and a leading figure of his day, produced in 1382 a translation of the Bible from

the Latin version into common English. He was aided in this by his pupil, Nicholas Hereford, who translated most of the Old Testament. Before the work was completed, Hereford was excommunicated, but Wyclif not only brought the great translation to completion but organized the circulation of it throughout England by itinerant preachers trained to read and explain it to the common people, a measure especially necessary in a day when printing was still unknown. After the death of Wyclif, in 1384, the translation was revised and improved by his friend and follower, John Purvey, and it is this form of the Wyclif translation, completed in 1388, that is preserved in most of the manuscripts of it that have come down to our day.

The invention of printing in the middle of the following century brought no immediate change. No one seems to have thought of printing Wyclif's version, already antique in style, and based only on the Latin, not on the original tongues. In that great age of awakening and discovery men sought rather a new and direct approach to the New Testament original. So it came about that Wyclif's version fortunately played no part in the development of the English New Testament. It was the printing of the Greek New Testament

that opened the way for the work of Tyndale. The great humanist scholar, Erasmus, who was the first to publish the Greek text, in 1516, in the Preface to that work expressed the wish that it might be translated into all languages. "I totally disagree with those," wrote Erasmus, "who are unwilling that the sacred scriptures, translated into the vulgar tongue, should be read by private individuals, as if Christ had taught such subtle doctrines that they can with difficulty be understood by a very few theologians, or as if the strength of the Christian religion lay in men's ignorance of it. . . . . I would wish all women even, to read the gospel and the Epistles of Paul. I wish they were translated into all languages of all peoples, that they might be read and known not merely by the Scotch and Irish, but even by the Turks and Saracens. . . . . I wish that the ploughman might sing parts of them at his plough, and the weaver at his shuttle, and that the traveller might beguile with their narration the weariness of his way."

Erasmus' wish found early fulfilment in Luther's German translation of 1522 and Tyndale's English version of 1525. Indeed, Tyndale was probably influenced by these words to make his famous remark to a certain "learned man," "If

God spare my lyfe, ere many yeares I wyl cause a boye that dryveth the plough shall know more of the scripture than thou doest!"

Tyndale was born somewhere on the Welsh border about the time of the discovery of America in 1492. He took his Master's degree at Oxford in 1515 and proceeded to Cambridge for further study, and there doubtless first saw Erasmus' edition of the New Testament in Greek, which appeared in 1516. During his university days he was ordained to the priesthood, and about 1521 he became chaplain and tutor in the house of Sir John Walsh, in Gloucestershire. It was probably there that he came to realize the need of an English New Testament, and formed the purpose of making his translation. He says that he "perceaved by experyence how that it was impossible to stablysh the laye people in any truth, excepte the scripture were playnly layde before their eyes in their mother tonge," "which thinge onlye," he adds, "moved me to translate the new testament."

The rising reputation of Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London, as a friend of learning led Tyndale to hope that he might encourage the enterprise; and he accordingly applied to Tunstall for a place in his service. But Tunstall said

that his house was full and "he had more then he could well finde," and advised Tyndale to look elsewhere. Humphrey Monmouth, an alderman of London, befriended him and took him into his house for six months, and it was probably here that Tyndale began his translation. Of this London sojourn Tyndale says, "In london I abode almoste an yere, ... and understode at the laste not only that there was no rowme in my lorde of londons palace to translate the new testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all englonde."

Tyndale therefore left England and went to Hamburg and thence probably to Wittenberg, to visit Luther, though this is by no means certain. Work on the translation must have continued, for the next year, 1525, he went to Cologne, and there began to print his New Testament.

This work was only well begun, and ten sheets of a quarto edition had been printed, when the undertaking was discovered by Johann Dobneck, better known as Cochlaeus, and reported to the authorities. The printing was at once stopped, but Tyndale and his assistant were able to escape by boat to Worms, taking with them the sheets already printed, and there they

continued the work. Tyndale was supported in it by certain English merchants who were interested in the Reformation and supplied him with funds. At Worms the quarto edition was continued and an octavo edition begun. The octavo was completed first, in 1525, and both editions reached England early in 1526, and were eagerly read. The authorities had been informed by Cochlaeus of his discovery at Cologne, and made every effort to suppress the book. It was denounced in unmeasured terms, and copies of it were bought up in large numbers and burned. In the summer of 1526 it was decided at a gathering of bishops that Tunstall should condemn the work in a sermon at Paul's Cross in London, and at the close the book should be publicly thrown into the fire. Tunstall followed this with a demand that anyone within the diocese of London who possessed a copy of the work should deliver it up to the church authorities or be excommunicated. This zealous campaign against the book resulted in the disappearance of all the first printings of it except one octavo, now at Bristol, England, and parts of one quarto and one octavo, which are in London.

An instructive glimpse of what church authorities thought of Tyndale's work at the time

is shown in a letter from Richard Nix, bishop of Norwich, to Archbishop Warham, who had written to the bishops in the province of Canterbury asking for subscriptions to pay for copies of Tyndale's New Testament of 1525, which the archbishop had bought up to burn. It is dated June 14, 1527:

I lately receyved your letters dated at your Manour of Lambethe the xxvi daie of the monethe of Maij, by the whiche I do perceyve that youre Grace hath lately goten into your handes all the bokes of the Newe Testamente translated into Englesshe and pryented beyonde the see, aswele those with the gloses ioyned unto theym as thoder withoute the gloses, by meanes of exchaunge by you made therfore to the somme of lxvi*l*.ix*s*.iiij*d*. Surely in myne opynion you have done therin a graciouse and a blessed dede, and God, I doubt not, shall highly rewarde you therfore. And where in your said letters ye write, that in so moche as this mater . . . . shulde not only have towched you but all the Busshoppes within your province . . . . and for that entente desire me to certifie you what convenyent somme I for my parte wulbe contented to yeve and avaunce in this behalve. . . . . Pleaseth it you tundrestande that I am right wele contented to yeve and avaunce in this behalve ten markes . . . . the whiche somme I thinke sufficient for my parte if every Busshopp within your said provynce make like contribution and avaunce-mente after the rate and substance of their benifices.

Modern translations of course have their critics, but none has ever been attacked with

such virulence as Tyndale's. Cochlaeus said of it: "The New Testament translated into the vulgar tongue is in truth the food of death, the fuel of sin, the veil of malice, the pretext of false liberty, the protection of disobedience, the corruption of discipline, the depravity of morals, the termination of concord, the death of honesty, the well-spring of vices, the disease of virtues, the instigation of rebellion, the milk of pride, the nourishment of contempt, the death of peace, the destruction of charity, the enemy of unity, the murderer of truth!"

Cochlaeus and the other opponents of Tyndale were of course adherents of the Latin Vulgate as the only proper form of the New Testament. They forgot that the Vulgate was itself only a translation, and that when it first appeared, although it was made by Jerome under instructions from Pope Damasus, it was vehemently attacked as an unwarrantable innovation even by men like Augustine. Antipathy to new translations of the Bible is in fact no novelty, but an attitude at least as old as the fourth century.

The question naturally arises, why Tyndale should have taken the trouble to make an original translation of the New Testament instead of simply reprinting Wyclif's earlier trans-

lation, of which he doubtless knew. The reason probably was that Wyclif's translation was made from the Latin Vulgate, instead of the original Greek, and was in fact a translation of a translation. Nothing more could have been thought of in Wyclif's time. In his day Greek was an unknown tongue in England, and even in Italy humanists like Boccaccio were just beginning to learn it. In addition to this, the changes which English had undergone since Wyclif's day made his version seem antique even in the time of Tyndale. For example, in the account of the call of Matthew, Wyclif says, "And he seide to hym, Sue me. And he roos, and suede him." Tyndale's feeling that a new translation based on a more original text was preferable to merely printing an English translation one hundred and forty years old is an instructive parallel to the attitude of modern translators who feel that the better modern knowledge of the text and the great changes in English made in four hundred years justify them in attempting new translations rather than in perpetuating or cautiously revising old ones.

In making his translation from the Greek, Tyndale took a great and significant forward step. Greek was by no means an old and estab-

lished study in Oxford in his day. Competent Greek instruction was first given in Oxford in 1491, only a year before the discovery of America. When about 1500 Erasmus, under the influence of Colet, decided to devote himself to the study of the Bible, and saw that to do this he must learn Greek, he could get no adequate Greek at Oxford, and had to go to Paris for it. The first permanent lectureship in Greek in Oxford was established in connection with the founding of Corpus Christi College, in 1516, one year after Tyndale had taken his Master's degree and left Oxford. But in the face of these difficulties, Tyndale did learn Greek, and New Testament translations thenceforth were the better for his doing so.

In spite of the vigorous efforts made to suppress it, Tyndale's translation had a wide circulation in England and went through a series of editions. It shows little influence, if any, of Wyclif's translation of 1382, which had been revised by Purvey in 1388 and was extant in Tyndale's day only in scattered manuscript copies. But Tyndale was acquainted with Luther's German translation of 1522, and appropriated many of his marginal notes. The Latin Vulgate, which was the prevalent form of the

New Testament in his day, also influenced him, as did a new Latin translation by Erasmus. It is not strange that Tyndale used these helps; he would be open to criticism if he had not done so, and his translation shows vigor and independence: as he said, "I had no man to counterfet, neither was holpe with englysshe of any that had interpreted the same, or soche lyke thinge in the scripture beforetyme."

Efforts were very soon made by Cardinal Wolsey to have Tyndale seized and brought to England, and he took refuge from his enemies at Marburg, where the tolerant views of the landgrave Philip enabled him to work in safety for two years. There other writings of his which had an important influence upon the English Reformation were published. On a journey to Hamburg in 1529, Tyndale was wrecked on the Dutch coast and lost the translation of Deuteronomy which he had completed from the original Hebrew, but he was able in 1530 to publish his translation of the whole Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy), a work hardly less important than his New Testament, for it laid the foundations of the English Old Testament. His translation of Jonah followed at Antwerp a year or two later, and before he died Tyndale had car-

ried his translation of the Hebrew Old Testament through Chronicles, and put into English for the first time half of the Hebrew Bible. Had his life been spared, Tyndale would have completed the translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew, which, without him, remained unfinished for many years.

With the fall of Wolsey and the rise of Cromwell to power, renewed efforts were made to bring Tyndale back to England, and in 1531 he was forced to withdraw from Antwerp. Always a somewhat solitary scholar, for the next two years he was virtually a fugitive. In 1533 he returned to Antwerp, however, and until 1535 lived in the house of the English merchants there, and there in 1534 he brought out the carefully revised edition of his New Testament on which his fame as a translator chiefly rests. A revised edition of his Pentateuch and another of his New Testament followed in 1535. But in that year he was betrayed by a supposed friend to the officers of the emperor, Charles V, and imprisoned in Vilvorde Castle, near Brussels. In a touching letter believed to have been written by him from prison, when winter was approaching, he asks for some warmer clothing of his from his former lodgings, a lamp to light his cell in

the evening, "for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark," and his Hebrew books, so that he may continue his translation of the Bible. After a long and trying imprisonment, he was condemned for heresy, and on October 6, 1536, was strangled and burned. Foxe records that his last words were, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes!"

Considerable as was the influence of Tyndale upon the thought of his day, it was slight in comparison to that which he has ever since exerted through his translation. Later editors of the English Bible steadily followed his version as far as they possessed it, and his work colors the New Testaments of Coverdale (1535), Rogers (1537), Taverner and the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), the Bishops' Bible (1568), and King James (1611). None of these is more than a revision of Tyndale, and his stamp remains on the modern revisions of 1881 and 1901. To the familiar forms of the English New Testament Tyndale has contributed not only more than any other man, but more than all others combined. He has shaped the religious vocabulary of the English-speaking world.

II

THE ENGLISH BIBLE AUTHORIZED

IN SPITE of systematic efforts to suppress it, Tyndale's New Testament passed through a score of editions. But its greatest effect was the indirect influence it exerted upon later English Bibles. Though Tyndale's work cost him his life, it succeeded, for it awoke England to the value of an English Bible, and through the great century of revision and publication that followed, it was the hand of Tyndale that still principally shaped its form. Tyndale's example and the response that his translation had called forth, in the face of bitter opposition, soon overbore the prestige which for a thousand years the Latin Vulgate had enjoyed, and won for the English Bible a place of influence and honor.

Had Tyndale's life been spared a few years longer, he would have completed the first English translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. But the victory of the English Bible was already won in his lifetime, for before his death, though from another hand, the English Bible made its first appearance in print.

In a bill drawn up in 1530 and published by the church authorities, it was announced that the king felt that to publish the Bible in English at that time would harm the cause of religion among the English people. But in 1534 the church authorities petitioned the king "to decree that the scriptures should be translated into the vulgar tongue." For some years Myles Coverdale had been at work upon an English Bible, with the encouragement of Cromwell himself, and in 1535, probably at Zurich, the book appeared. Although the book was not at first actually licensed by the king, it was dedicated to Henry VIII and was not suppressed, and the second edition (1537)claims "the Kynges moost gracious licence" for its publication. The title-page described it as "faithfully and truly translated out of Douche and Latyn in to Englishe." By "Douche," German is meant, and the work is much influenced by Luther's Bible and even more by the Swiss German Bible first published in 1524–29 at Zurich by Zwingli and Leo Juda. The Vulgate and the version of Pagninus of 1528 were Coverdale's Latin authorities. But he was greatly helped by Tyndale's work in the Pentateuch, and most of all in the New Testament. Coverdale's New Testament has in fact been

described as a revision of Tyndale's New Testament (first and second editions) with the aid of the German translations, for which he had a marked fondness.

"It grieved me," says Coverdale in his Prologue, "that other nations should be more plenteously provided for with the Scripture in their mother tongue than we. . . . . Sure I am, that there commeth more knowlege and understondinge of the Scripture by their sondrie translacyons than by all the gloses of oure sophisticall doctours." Coverdale's work had little originality; he was less an independent scholar than an editor and organizer of other men's labors. But he has the great distinction of having produced the first complete English Bible to appear in print, and his work, though done so largely at second hand, had a notable influence upon later editions.

Had Coverdale made a translation of the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew, as Tyndale had begun to do, he might have omitted from this first English Bible the books which are not contained in the Hebrew and which since the time of Jerome have been known as the Apocrypha. But working as he did under the influence, not of the original Hebrew, but of Latin and German translations, he very naturally in-

cluded these books, which were a recognized part of the Bible of his day, the Latin Vulgate; and so the Apocrypha, which had always formed part of the Greek and Latin Bibles, found a place from the beginning in the English Bible. In Coverdale's Bible they have this heading: "Apocripha —The bokes and treatises which amonge the fathers of olde are not rekened to be of like authoritie with the other bokes of the Byble, neyther are they founde in the Canon of the Hebrue."

Two years later, in 1537, a second English Bible appeared, under the name of Thomas Matthew. It was really the work of John Rogers, Tyndale's friend and literary executor, who had been chaplain of the English House at Antwerp during Tyndale's residence there. Like Coverdale's Bible, it was dedicated to the king. Rogers' New Testament is Tyndale's final revision of 1535, and in the Old Testament he used Tyndale's translation of the Hebrew from Genesis to Chronicles, to which point Tyndale in his last days in prison had succeeded in carrying his version. The rest of Rogers' Bible was taken over from Coverdale, and so was based upon Latin and German translations and included the Apocrypha.

It was of this Rogers Bible of 1537 that Cranmer wrote to Cromwell: "You shall receive by the bringer hereof a bible in English both of a new translation and of a new print. . . . . So far as I have read thereof I like it better than any other translation heretofore made. I pray you that you will exhibit the book unto the king's highness, and to obtain of his grace if you can a license that the same may be sold and read of every person . . . . until such time that we, the bishops, shall set forth a better translation, which I think will not be till a day after doomsday." Cranmer's last remark is an allusion to the Great Bible of 1539, which was evidently already in preparation.

Cromwell immediately secured the king's license for the sale and use of Rogers' edition, and thus another step was taken in the circulation of the English Bible. So it came about that, while Tyndale's New Testament as a separate volume was virtually suppressed, his translation as republished by Rogers was licensed by the king and became the basis of the three authorized English Bibles—the Great Bible, the Bishops', and the King James.

The Rogers Bible includes the Apocrypha, "Contayned in the comen translacion in Latyne,

which are not found in the Hebrue nor in the Chalde." It gives a list of fourteen such books and, in an address to the reader, explains the grounds for including them and the somewhat limited authority allowed them, quoting the judgment of Jerome "that men may reade them to the edyfyinge of the people: but not to confyrme and strengthen the doctryne of the church."

Rogers' Bible not only went through five printings within as many years, but was speedily made the basis of a clever revision by Richard Taverner, a London lawyer, of good Greek scholarship and some literary skill. His Bible appeared in 1539. It was reprinted ten years later, and his New Testament was three times printed separately. But his work did not greatly influence the form of the English Bible, partly because it was at once overshadowed by the official edition, known as the Great Bible, to which Cranmer and Cromwell had been looking forward and which had just appeared.

We have seen that the church authorities as early as 1534 urged upon the king the translation of the Bible "into the vulgar tongue," and the next year had witnessed Coverdale's publication of an English Bible. It was probably in 1536

that Coverdale was instructed by Cromwell to prepare a new revision of that work, and the appearance of Rogers' Bible in 1537, as Cranmer saw, supplied valuable new materials for it. The new Bible, called from its size the Great Bible, was in fact merely a revision of Rogers, with the aid of Münster's new Latin version of the Hebrew (1534–35) in the Old Testament, and of Erasmus' Latin version and the Latin Vulgate in the New.

The story of the production of the Great Bible is one of the romances of the history of printing. The publication of the book on the grand scale planned by Cromwell was beyond the powers of English printers, and the work was begun in Paris by the famous French printer, Regnault, in 1538. Although Francis I had, at the request of Henry VIII, authorized Regnault to print the book, the work was interrupted before the end of that year by the officers of the Inquisition, who ordered the printing stopped and the printed sheets seized. But their interference had been anticipated, and with the aid of Bishop Bonner, the English Ambassador at Paris, most of the sheets had been forwarded to England. Coverdale and Grafton, who were in Paris seeing the book through the press, fled

from France. A little later the printers and their equipment were removed to London, and many of the confiscated sheets—"four great dry-fattes full,"—which had been sold as waste paper to a haberdasher to pack hats in, were recovered. Many more were later recovered by diplomatic pressure. The printing was resumed in London, and there the book appeared in the spring of 1539. So difficult was it in the sixteenth century, even with the aid of the kings of France and England, to print the English Bible.

The Great Bible was free from the notes which had given offense to many in Tyndale's New Testament and Rogers' Bible. In it "the Apogrypha, the fourth parte of the Bible," followed the prophets at the end of the Old Testament, with no such explanation of their minor status as Coverdale and Rogers had given. The chapter summaries which had been introduced by Rogers and repeated in Taverner reappear with slight changes here.

England was ready for the Great Bible. In anticipation of its appearance, Cromwell had issued an order to the clergy to provide by a certain date "one boke of the whole Bible in the largest volume, in Englyshe, set up in summe convenient place within the church that ye

have care of, whereat your parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same and rede it." This step had most significant consequences in spreading the knowledge of the Bible throughout England.

The splendid proportions of the Great Bible gave it its name, though it is often called Cranmer's Bible, from the fact that Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, wrote a prologue for the second edition, which appeared early in 1540. By that time the king had licensed the publication, and the Great Bible had gone through seven printings by the end of 1541. In 1540 Cromwell, who had been its principal sponsor, was dismissed and executed. But whatever his motives, he had lived to do a memorable service to the cause of the English Bible, and after 1541 no more Bibles were printed during the reign of Henry VIII.

Beginning with the second edition of 1540, the Great Bible had upon the title-page the words, "This is the Byble apoynted to the use of the churches," which mark it as the first authorized English Bible. Thus another step was taken in the recognition and circulation of the Bible in English, for it now had the support of church and king.

The historians of the time give glowing accounts of the eagerness with which the Bible now began to be read by the English people. "Englishmen have now in hand in every church and place, almost every man the Holy Bible and New Testament in their mother tongue instead of the old fabulous and fantastical books of the Table Round, Launcelot du Lac, etc."

"It was wonderful," said another, "to see with what joy this book of God was received not only among the learneder sort and those that were noted for lovers of the reformation, but generally all England over among all the vulgar and common people; and with what greediness God's word was read and what resort to places where the reading of it was. Every body that could bought the book or busily read it or got others to read it to them if they could not themselves, and divers more elderly people learned to read on purpose."

In all these early printings of the New Testament we see the work of Tyndale. They are not new translations, but only reprintings or revisions of his editions of 1525, 1534, and 1535. Taverner, it is true, somewhat revised Tyndale with the aid of the Greek text, but neither his New Testament nor any of the others published

in this early period can be dignified as a version. They are all followers of Tyndale and nothing more. His translation, at first condemned and proscribed, had within fifteen years become the Authorized New Testament of the English Church.

III

THE SECOND PERIOD OF REVISION

ABOUT the middle of the sixteenth century, two events occurred which were of great significance for the English Bible. One was the publication, in 1549, of the Book of Common Prayer; the other was the invention of the New Testament verses. The Book of Common Prayer included the Psalter, which was printed in the form that appears in the Great Bible of 1539, the Authorized Version of the day. So great is the influence of liturgical use that the Psalter of the Great Bible still remains the Psalter of the Prayer Book, although the Bible from which it was taken has long since been superseded by newer authorized versions.

The chapter divisions of the New Testament were made probably by Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, soon after 1200 A.D., for use in the Latin Vulgate. In 1551 a French printer, Robert Estienne, was planning a concordance of the New Testament and wished a smaller unit of reference for it. He accordingly divided the chapters into verses. Most of this

he did in the course of a journey on horseback between Paris and Lyons, marking off the chapters into a total of 7,959 verses, and this division first appears in his fourth edition of the New Testament in Greek, published in 1551. Estienne's division has been of immeasurable convenience to students of the New Testament and has had enormous influence. Up to 1551, no New Testament had been divided into verses; soon after that time, it became customary in English translations not only to number the verses but to print each verse as a paragraph, a verse-number immediately preceding. But in an age when people were far less accustomed to reading than they are now, the short paragraphs and the open page made the reading of the English translation easier, and encouraged at least the casual reading of the Bible on the part of old and young.

But the verses actually had another effect doubtless undreamed of by their ingenious inventor, in that they broke the text into detached fragments and seemed to co-ordinate the 7,959 paragraphs as so many independent declarations of truth, which might be pieced together at will, irrespective of their connection. More than a century later, the danger of Estienne's

verse division was vigorously pointed out by John Locke, in his *Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles by Consulting St. Paul Himself.* He deplores "the dividing of them into Chapters and Verses, as we have done, whereby they are so chop'd and minc'd, and as they are now Printed, stand so broken and divided, that not only the Common People take the Verses usually for distinct Aphorisms, but even Men of more advanced Knowledge in reading them, lose very much of the strength and force of the Coherence, and the Light that depends on it. . . . . These Divisions also have given occasion to the reading these Epistles by parcels and in scraps, which has farther confirmed the Evil arising from such partitions. And I doubt not but every one will confess it to be a very unlikely way to come to the Understanding of any other Letters to read them Peicemeal, a Bit today and another Scrap tomorrow, and so on by broken Intervals. . . . . How plain soever this Abuse is, and what Prejudice soever it does to the Understanding of the Sacred Scripture, yet if a Bible was printed as it should be, and as the several parts of it were writ, in continued Discourses where the Argument is continued, I doubt not but the several Parties would complain of it,

as an Innovation, and a dangerous Change in the publishing these holy Books. . . . . They would most of them be immediately disarm'd of their great Magazine of Artillery wherewith they defend themselves, and fall upon others, if the Holy Scripture were but laid before the Eyes of Christians in its due Connection and Consistency."

It would be difficult to improve upon this account of the baneful results of the verse division. With all the undeniable convenience of the verse-numbering for purposes of study, the breaking of the text into thousands of unmeaning paragraphs dealt a fearful blow to the continuous and coherent reading and understanding of the New Testament books. In fact, they made such reading practically impossible, for the reader found himself constantly interrupted by a false paragraph division, as though some mischievous imp at his elbow were ever and again distracting his attention from following the argument of the apostle or the narrative of the evangelist. This system also invited the reader to begin anywhere and to stop anywhere, and most of all it subtly suggested to him the picking up of a verse here and a verse there as though each one had the completeness and unity of a proverb.

It was, in fact, the extension to the whole Bible of a method of division which is appropriate only to the Book of Proverbs.

The first English New Testament to make use of the new verse division was produced at Geneva, Switzerland, in 1557, by William Whittingham, one of the English Protestants who had taken refuge there from Queen Mary's persecution. It was further improved by Whittingham and others and formed part of a complete Bible published at Geneva in 1560, after a revision lasting "for the space of two yeres and more day and night." The Geneva Bible is often called the Breeches Bible, because in Gen. 3:7 it reads, "They sewed figge tree leaves together, and made themselves breeches."

Many things made the Geneva Bible widely popular. It was smaller and more convenient in size than its predecessors, and it was therefore less costly; it was printed in the Roman type that is in general use today, instead of in the old black-letter, and it contained helpful explanatory notes. These things made it especially suited to private use, and editions of it continued to appear long after the King James version was published. The latter half of its Old Testament rests more directly on the original

Hebrew than it had in any earlier English Bible, but like its immediate predecessors, the Great Bible and John Rogers' Bible, in the New Testament it is in substance a revision of Tyndale, although considerably influenced by Beza's Latin translation of 1556. The Lord's Prayer reached substantially its present form in the Geneva Bible, the only differences being its use of the words "even" and "also." The chapter summaries introduced by Rogers are often much expanded. The use of the verse division of Estienne's Greek New Testament of 1551 shows that that edition was in the hands of the makers of the Geneva Bible, and it slightly affected their revision of the existing English version. But while Estienne knew more manuscripts than Erasmus had known, his Greek text really differed little from that of Erasmus, which Tyndale had used.

The Geneva New Testament was still further revised by Lawrence Tomson, and published in 1576 with a new commentary, of which he sanguinely says, "I dare avouch it, and whoso readeth it, shall so find it, that there is not one hard sentence, nor dark speech nor doubtful word, but is so opened and hath such light given to it, that children may go through with it, and

the simplest that are, may walk without any guide, without wandering and going astray." Tomson's New Testament is described on the title-page as "Translated out of Greeke by Theod. Beza," and it is in fact more affected by Beza's Latin translation than were the earlier Geneva New Testaments. It sometimes takes the place of Whittingham's of 1560 in later printings of the Geneva Bible.

Notwithstanding its use of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Geneva Bible continued at first at least to include the Apocrypha, which did not appear in the Hebrew. Copies dated 1599, though perhaps actually of later date, are the first to omit the sheets containing them, although they still include them in the Table of Contents. The sale of copies omitting them was forbidden by Archbishop Abbot in 1615, on pain of a year's imprisonment.

The Geneva Bible was the Bible of Cromwell's army. By 1644 it had gone through more than one hundred and forty editions, for while its use in churches was not usually allowed, it was for two generations the household Bible of England.

The extraordinary popularity of the Geneva Bible, which Englishmen now read at home,

brought out very plainly its superiority in accuracy and clearness to the Great Bible, which they heard read in church, and in 1563 or 1564 Archbishop Parker undertook to organize a revision of the Great Bible for church use. The work was divided among a number of scholarly men, so many of whom were bishops that it came to be known as the Bishops' Bible. Much of the New Testament seems to have been revised by the archbishop himself, while Acts and Romans were done by Richard Cox, bishop of Ely, and First Corinthians by Gabriel Goodman, dean of Westminster. The first principle of the revision was "to follow the common English translation used in churches and not to recede from it but where it varieth manifestly from the Hebrew or Greek original." Its New Testament thus rested directly upon the Great Bible and so upon Rogers' edition of Tyndale. The verse division of the Geneva Bible was followed, and many of its striking departures from the Great Bible, such as "Peter's wives mother" for "Peter's mother in lawe." Bishop Cox had expressed the wish that "such usual words as we English people be acquainted with might still remain in their form and sound, ... ink-horn terms to be avoided." But the revisers substituted "char-

ity" for Tyndale's "love" nine times in First Corinthians 13 (doubtless influenced by the Vulgate "charitas"), thus helping the music of the chapter almost as much as they hurt its sense. A keen sense for sound characterized much of their work, and much of the liturgical effectiveness of the later King James Version is probably due to them. In the Lord's Prayer, which in the Geneva Bible had reached its present form, the bishops still preserved the Great Bible's form, even going back of it to Tyndale's "O oure father."

"Menne we be al," says Archbishop Parker in his Preface, "and that which we knowe is not the thousande part of that we knowe not." He proceeds to quote these remarkable words of John Fisher, once bishop of Rochester: "For there be yet in the gospelles very many darke places, whiche without al doubt to the posteritie shalbe made muche more open . . . . who can doubt, but that suche thinges as remayne yet unknowen in the gospel, shalbe hereafter made open to the latter wittes of our posteritie, to their cleare understanding."

The Bishops' Bible appeared in 1568, in a magnificent folio. The makers of it revised the Psalms along with the rest of the Bible, but this

part of their version failed to displace the Psalter of the Great Bible, which had found a place in the Book of Common Prayer. The conflict between the two Psalters may be traced in the successive editions of the Bishops' Bible. In the second edition of 1572, the Psalms of the Great Bible are reprinted in parallel columns with the Bishops' revision, with this somewhat plaintive Preface:

"Now let the gentle reader haue this Christian consyderation within himselfe, that though he findeth the Psalmes of this later translation folowing, not so to sounde agreeably to his eares in his wonted woordes and phrases, as he is accustomed with: yet let him not be to much offended with the worke, which was wrought for his owne commoditie and comfort. And if he be learned, let him correct the woorde or sentence (which may dislike him) with the better, and whether his note ryseth either of good wyll and charitie, either of enuie and contention not purely, yet his reprehension, if it may turne to the finding out of the trueth, shall not be repelled with griefe, but applauded to in gladnesse."

Not even this appeal could gain a hearing for the Bishops' Psalter, and in the last printings of the Bishops' Bible, their Psalter generally gave

place to that of the Great Bible, which had the prestige of a place in the Prayer Book.

The Bishops' Bible is the real Elizabethan Bible. It was the official Bible of Shakespeare's day. It was undertaken in the early years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and while never actually authorized by her, it was endorsed by Convocation, which in 1571 ordered that "every archbishop and bishop should have at his house a copy of the holy Bible of the largest volume as lately printed at London, ... and that it should be placed in the hall of the large dining-room, that it might be useful to their servants or to strangers." The Bishops' Bible thus succeeded the Great Bible as the one "appoynted to bee read in the Churches," and became the second authorized Bible, a position which it held for forty years.

These six Bibles, produced by the Reformers and based in the New Testament upon the Greek and in the Old Testament at least in part upon the Hebrew, put Roman Catholic Englishmen, without a version of their own, at a decided disadvantage; and this led Roman Catholic scholars at the English College at Rheims to undertake a translation of the Bible from the Latin Vulgate, the official Bible of the Catholic Church. Their

New Testament appeared at Rheims in 1582; the Old Testament was completed at that time, but for lack of funds was not actually printed until 1609–10, by which time the college had moved back to its former home at Douay. For this reason the completed work is often called the Douay Bible. By the latter date, the authoritative edition of the Vulgate had been printed by Clement VIII in 1592, and the Douay Old Testament is adjusted to its readings. The work of translation was done by Gregory Martin, who began it in 1578, and proceeding at the rate of two chapters a day, completed it in March, 1582.

The originators of the Douay New Testament, among whom William Allen was the leader, did not heartily believe in putting the Bible into the common speech. They say in their Preface that what moved them was rather the existence among the Protestants of "false translations," the makers of which are charged with "corrupting both the letter and the sense by false translation, adding, detracting, altering, transposing, pointing, and all other guileful means, specially where it serveth for the advantage of their private opinions." In view of these "corrupt versions," the Douay editors go on to say, they have set forth the New Testa-

ment, that it may lead its readers "to lay away at least such their impure versions as hitherto you have been forced to occupy."

While the influence of the earlier translations here complained of, especially the Geneva, is very marked in the Douay New Testament, the distinctive feature of the new version is its Latin element. "I am the good Pastor"; "Give us today our supersubstantial bread"; "She saw the stone taken away from the monument"; "Do penance, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand"; "That in the name of Jesus, every knee bow, of the celestials, terrestrials, and infernals"; "But he exinanited himself, taking the form of a servant." This naturally led to much obscurity. The most famous Old Testament example is from Psalm 58:9, "Before your thornes did understand the old bryar: as living so in wrath he swalloweth them." It is safe to say that nowhere except in the Bible would such translation as this be tolerated. It is almost equaled by Heb. 13:16: "And beneficence and communication do not forget, for with such hostes God is promerited." Not only is the Douay a translation of a translation, but, as Fuller remarked, a translation which needed to be translated, for the passages quoted are unintelligible to anyone

unacquainted with the Latin. The translators were aware of this aspect of their work, and disclaimed any intention of making their version clear when the Latin was not so. The obscurity of their translation was increased by their practice of transferring many names of feasts and the like into English: "Pasch" (Passover), "Parasceue" (Preparation), "Scenopegia" (Tabernacles), "Azymes" (Unleavened Bread), "bread of proposition" (shewbread), etc. They defended such usages, quite properly, by the analogy of "Pentecost," as they did their use of "neophyte" by "proselyte," and of "didragmes" and "Paraclete" by the "phylacteries" of the earlier translations. This criticism was sound, but the Douay scholars drew from it the wrong inference. Instead of imitating the half-translations of their predecessors, they should have turned and gone in the opposite direction. Modern translators have seen this error of the early versions which the Douay editors pointed out, but have found in it a hint to complete the task of translation in such words as "Pentecost," "proselyte," and "phylacteries."

The bane of the Douay New Testament was the mistaken idea, frankly expressed by its makers, that much that is in the New Testament

cannot be successfully put into English. It is obvious that with such a presupposition, no serious grappling with the task of translation can be expected, for the translator can at any time despair of the translatability of the passage before him and take refuge behind a mere form of words.

The highly Latinized vocabulary of the Douay New Testament afterward had a marked influence upon the King James Version, in such Latin derivatives as "impenitent," "concupiscence," "remission," "expectation," "emulation," "contribution," and the like. The Geneva and the Bishops' had already shown a tendency in this direction, and the Douay went much farther.

It is of interest that the Douay New Testament, although it has Estienne's verse numbers in the margin, does not break the text into the corresponding short paragraphs as the Geneva and the Bishops' had done, and as the King James did afterward. In this it showed a sound literary sense altogether exceptional in that age.

There could be no more striking evidence of the triumph of the English New Testament than the production of this Roman Catholic version.

In a little more than fifty years the English New Testament had fought its way in the face of the bitterest opposition of civil and ecclesiastical authorities, Protestant and Catholic, until even its most unrelenting enemy had been forced to yield.

IV

THE KING JAMES VERSION

IN 1604 King James I called a conference of high and low churchmen at Hampton Court, to consider "things pretended to be amiss in the church." The revision of the Bible does not seem to have been on the program, but a university man, Dr. Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, brought it up by proposing that the English Bible be revised. The king caught up the suggestion, expressed his own dissatisfaction with all existing translations, and said the thing ought "to be done by the best learned in both the Universities." The Old Testament was divided among four groups of scholars, and the New Testament between two. One of these, consisting of eight members, was to revise the gospels, Acts, and Revelation, the other, consisting of seven, the epistles. The work was to be not a new translation, but a revision, as the Preface clearly states:

"Truly (good Christian reader), wee never thought from the beginning, that we should neede to make a new Translation, nor yet to

make of a bad one a good one . . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principall good one, not justly to be excepted against."

The conciliatory, even apologetic note in this is unmistakable, and reminds us that the King James Version had its way to make with the adherents of the earlier Bibles, especially the Geneva and the Bishops'.

The first principle of the new revision was this: "The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called 'the Bishops' Bible' to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit." But Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Rogers', the Great Bible, and the Geneva were to be consulted.

While the whole was finally gone over by a small group of editors, different forms for the same proper names were left standing, so that while the Old Testament says Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and Jonah, the New calls them Esaias, Jeremias or Jeremie, Osee, and Jonas. The Old Testament form Noah is used in the New Testament epistles, but Noe is used for the same Greek word in the gospels, which were the work of another committee of revisers. A great forward step in the treatment of Hebrew names had

been taken by the Geneva revisers, and their advance was followed by the King James revisers of the Old Testament. Coverdale had used such forms as Esay (for Isaiah) and Abdy (for Obadiah), and these and similar forms for the titles of the prophetic books continued with slight modifications (Abdias) in the Great Bible and the Bishops'. The new forms in imitation of the Hebrew appear first in the Geneva and were followed in the King James Old Testament.

The King James Version appeared in 1611 in a stately folio, and a second folio edition partly printed in 1611 came out in 1613. The two printings differ in many slight details, especially of spelling. One of these, the change of "he" to "she" in the clause "and he went into the city," in Ruth 3:15, has given the two printings, among collectors and dealers, the nicknames of the "He" and "She" Bibles. While many misprints were corrected in the second printing, the use of the preposition "at" for "out" in Matt. 23:24, "straining at a gnat," which it shares with the Douay version, was not corrected and never has been, remaining probably the most famous misprint in literature. All the earlier translations except the Douay read "out," and

that is undoubtedly the meaning of both Greek and Latin.

Like the Bishops', the King James Bible retains the verse division which had first been used in the Geneva. It followed the Bishops' also in presenting the Apocrypha without any introductory qualification of their value as Scripture, a fact which makes their tacit omission from many later printings of the King James Bible (beginning with 1629) the more strange. For, whatever we may think of the Apocrypha, the makers of the King James Bible included them without scruple, and Bibles without them are in so far certainly not authentic reprints of King James. The action of Archbishop Abbot in 1615 in forbidding the sale of Bibles not containing the Apocrypha, on pain of a year's imprisonment, shows how seriously the Apocrypha were taken by the makers of the King James Version, for Abbot was one of King James' New Testament revisers.

A development may be observed in the titles given the several books, particularly the gospels, by the successive revisions from Tyndale down. Tyndale, Rogers, and the Great Bible print "The Gospell of S. Mathew" (Matthewe). The Geneva has "The holy gospel of Jesus Christ ac-

cording to Matthew." The Bishops' reads, "The Gospel by Saint Matthaewe," and King James, "The Gospel according to S. Matthew."

The King James Version is usually reckoned the third authorized English Bible, but it seems never to have been really authorized by church or state, except as it was undertaken with the king's approval and accepted as the successor of the Bishops' Bible, to be read in public worship. It was itself revised almost immediately, the small edition of 1615 showing hundreds of changes, mostly slight, such as "begat" for "begate," "Jerusalem" for "Hierusalem," and the like. It was further revised in 1629 and in 1638, and a fresh revision was under consideration in 1654, when the civil disturbances broke out that led to the Restoration of the Stuarts. It was again revised in 1762 and again finally in 1769. Explanatory notes were introduced as early as 1642, and Ussher's famous chronology was inserted in Bishop Lloyd's edition of 1701. The more antique of the spellings were tacitly modernized in these successive revisions, by such men as Ward, Paris, Blayney, Scattergood, and others now forgotten.

Some parts of the King James New Testament as actually printed in 1611 make a strange

impression upon the reader because of the unfamiliar forms of many words, such as "moneth," "fornace," "charet," "murther," "middes," "thorow," "damosel," "souldiers," "ancres," "figge tree," "bottomlesse pitte," "sunne," "moone," "starres," "oyle," "ayre," "shalbe," "fift," "sixt," "moe," "fet," "creeple," "Marie," "Gethsemani," "Hierusalem," "Moyses." These and other antique spellings began to be corrected in the revision of 1615, and the work of assimilation to contemporary usage continued in the subsequent revisions, ending with 1769. Oddly enough, they have left "Sodoma" in Rom. 9:29 unchanged. The actual changes in wording made by the revisers are usually slight and infrequent. "A doctor of the law" for "a Doctor of Law" (Acts 5:34); "dumb before his shearer" (with Geneva) for "dumb before the shearer" (Bishops'); "impossible" for "unpossible"; "Let us not rend it" for "Let not us rent it" (John 19:24) are examples.

The version was not without its harshnesses: "Whom do men say that I am?" "Let not us rent it"; "I am verily a man which am a Jew"; "and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree." The King James Version has an unfortunate way of occasionally suggesting to the

reader an idea wholly foreign to the meaning of the author translated, such as "that mine adversary had written a booke," which really has nothing at all to do with the meaning of Job 31:35, or "Lay hands suddenly on no man" (I Tim. 5:22), which hardly suggests to the average reader the solemnities of ordination.

The diction of the King James New Testament—syntax, vocabulary, and style—is almost wholly borrowed from its predecessors, principally from the Bishops' Bible, but considerably from the Geneva and even the Douay. Its Lord's Prayer is precisely like the Geneva, except for two words, "even" and "also." While it has been much praised for its terse and vigorous Angle-Saxon words, the truth is that in this respect it falls below all its predecessors except the Douay. The history of the English versions from Tyndale to King James shows in fact a gradual filtering in of Latin derivatives, such as "justification" and "regeneration," which make their appearance in the Great Bible: "inventer," "premeditate," "edification," "dispensation," and "sanctification," which first appear in the Geneva; and "propitiation," which is first found in the Bishops'. A whole series of words of Latin origin were contributed by the Douay, and

passed, with all these, into the King James, beside others like "implacable," which appear first in King James. The Anglo-Saxon element in King James is therefore a limited survival from William Tyndale, whose sturdy native English was steadily and studiously reduced by his successors beginning with Coverdale, all of whom thought to refine and elevate the translation by in some degree Latinizing its style.

The King James Bible is sometimes spoken of as though it were a monosyllabic version. The tendency to Latin derivatives just described is a sufficient answer to such claims, but an even more telling one lies in the very character of sixteenth-century English morphology. Such forms as "goest," "wouldest," "mightest," "cometh," "heareth," "willeth," "maketh," and a hundred others, for which we employ monosyllables, show at a glance how impossible, in the very nature of sixteenth-century language, it was to be monosyllabic. But the makers of the King James Version had no desire to be monosyllabic. Their inclinations lay in the other direction, and they would have been the first to protest against the idea of reducing the Bible to words of one syllable. On the contrary, they found a real beauty in sonority and rhythm, and skilfully employed

a wide vocabulary which had been enriched by almost a century of translation. So we find in them sentences like "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality," or this from Second Corinthians: "For the administration of this service not onely supplieth the want of the Saints, but is abundant also by many thankesgivings unto God, Whiles by the experiment of this ministration, they glorifie God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberall distribution unto them, and unto all men."

The first printings of the King James Bible are almost entirely free from the disfiguring masses of ingenious cross-references with which in modern reprints the text is smothered, and which, combined with the distracting verse division, led the late Professor Moulton to say that the English Bible was the worst-printed book in the world. Originally a stately and beautiful book, these embellishments of successive revisers have so crowded its pages with extraneous matter that as printed today it often looks more like a surveyor's manual than a work of literature.

In the famous Preface to the King James Bible, the Bishop of Gloucester wrote that it was

the aim of its producers that it should be "understood even of the very vulgar," a phrase that recalls Tyndale's noble purpose of making the Bible intelligible to the very plowboys of England. It not only succeeded the Bishops' Bible as the one to be read in churches, but within half a century it had actually displaced the Geneva as the household Bible of England. The makers of the King James Version notably succeeded in their professed purpose to make out of many good translations "one principall good one, not justly to be excepted against." They skilfully tempered together the materials supplied by their predecessors into a serene and stately version which commanded the respect of scholars and men of letters and the devotion of religious hearts for centuries. It came in time to be freighted with memories and associations, and so took on added religious value, while the historian finds reflected in its phraseology the whole history of English Protestantism. It occupies a place in English literature and in Christian liturgy that is and probably always will be unique.

Of the worth of the King James Version it is enough to say that it served the needs of English Protestantism practically alone for more than two hundred and fifty years, and is still widely

used and highly prized for its rich associations and quaint old English speech. The slightly elaborate diction imparted to it by the makers of the Geneva and the Bishops' Bibles contributed to its liturgical effectiveness, but it was the terse and telling common English of William Tyndale that chiefly colored the King James Bible. It is in fact, in the New Testament at least, no more than a revision of his final edition of 1535, being a revision of the Bishops', which was a revision of the Great Bible, which was in turn a revision of John Rogers', which embodied the last work of Tyndale. It is not too much to say that William Tyndale wrote nine-tenths of the King James New Testament.

V

THE DISCOVERY OF THE ANCIENT TEXT

WITHIN twenty years after the publication of the King James Version, there appeared in England the first of those ancient manuscripts of the Greek Testament which have in the past three centuries transformed our knowledge of its text. This was the Codex Alexandrinus, which was sent in 1628 as a present to the king of England from Cyril Lucar, the patriarch of Constantinople. It took its name from the fact that it was a leaf book (codex), not a roll, and it had formerly been at Alexandria, where Cyril Lucar had been patriarch before his removal to Constantinople. It was what is known as a "pandect," that is, it contained substantially the whole Greek Bible—the Old Testament with the Apocrypha, and the New Testament, with the two so-called "Letters of Clement." It dated from the fifth century, and because of its age, its contents, and the character of its text, it became the object of an immense amount of scholarly attention in England. Indeed, the ad-

vance made in the science of textual study in England to this day is in no small degree traceable to the coming of this manuscript.

Tyndale's translation of 1525 had been based upon the third edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament, which had just appeared, in 1522, and was in Tyndale's time the best and latest Greek text to be had. It was first printed in 1516, when Erasmus, at the instance of Froben, a printer of Basle, had prepared the first edition of the Greek text ever published. It had been produced in great haste, to forestall an edition that was being issued in Spain, and was based on five Greek manuscripts which Erasmus found at Basle, all of them written in the cursive or running hand of the Middle Ages and dating from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. None of the really ancient Greek manuscripts of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, on which modern scholarship bases the text of the New Testament, had at that time been discovered, except the Vatican manuscript, and no attention had been paid to it. With these late and meager materials Erasmus in less than a year brought out his text, of which he himself said that it was rushed through rather than edited. In his second and third editions he corrected many of the mis-

prints of the first, but made little use of other manuscripts and did not materially improve his text. Two or three things will suggest the careless and almost reckless way in which Erasmus produced his edition. While he had five manuscripts, no one of them contained the whole New Testament. One of them, a fifteenth-century manuscript containing the gospels, and another, of the thirteenth, containing Acts and the epistles, Erasmus sent to the printer to be set up, simply putting into the proof such readings from his other manuscripts as he in examining them came to think superior. His text was thus fundamentally that of the two manuscripts that he sent to the printer, neither of which was of any great age or worth. Of the Revelation, Erasmus had a single Greek manuscript, and that was incomplete. Its slight gaps he cleverly supplied by retranslating the lost portions from the Vulgate Latin, thus introducing into his edition some phrases for which no authority has ever been found in Greek manuscripts. But the most glaring liberty taken by Erasmus with the Greek text was his insertion of the verse about the Three Heavenly Witnesses in I John 5:7. This sentence did not appear in any of his Greek manuscripts, and does not stand in his first edi-

tion of 1516. But it did stand in the Latin Vulgate, and adherents of that version called upon Erasmus to insert it in his Greek text. He replied to his critics that if they could show a Greek manuscript containing the sentence, he would comply. They drew his attention to such a manuscript, very recently written. Erasmus permitted himself to be led by this into accepting the verse against his better judgment, and inserted it in his third edition of 1522. So it comes about that it stands in Tyndale's translation and in the whole series of English versions, including the King James. In this casual way Erasmus dealt with the serious problems of the Greek text of the New Testament, and in so doing infected the text of the early English translators with numerous needless errors.

The publishers of the Greek New Testament who followed Erasmus were acquainted with more manuscripts than he, but made little improvement upon his printed text. Estienne, a generation later, was content practically to reprint the text of Erasmus' last edition, and Beza, whose text the King James committees consulted in making their revision, based his first edition upon Estienne's last. The idea that a purer text of the Greek New Testament might

reasonably be sought from more ancient manuscripts of it may have occurred to these editors, but had no effect upon the texts they printed. Beza had in his possession a sixth-century Greek manuscript of the gospels which has ever since been called after him, the Codex of Beza, and is now in the library of the University of Cambridge. But in editing his Greek text, which ran through several editions, he made no use of it, perhaps because of its frequent and often unaccountable variations from the usual text, which still perplex textual scholars.

The Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex of Beza in England, and the Royal Codex, of the eighth century, in Paris formed the advance guard of that host of uncials, or manuscripts in capital letters, from the fourth to the ninth centuries, that now began to come through Greece and Italy to the knowledge of the scholars of Western Europe. They came by the hands of travelers or refugees, from church and convent libraries of the old Greek Empire, which had fallen before the Turks. Each of them has a history of almost personal interest, as the story of a few of the most notable will show.

About the year 1700, a certain Pierre Allix noticed that a twelfth-century Greek manu-

script in Paris contained a faint older writing, which he identified as the Greek text of portions of the Old and New Testaments. The leaves were parts of a fifth-century pandect like Alexandrinus, but the faded manuscript had been pulled to pieces in the twelfth century and the leaves, turned wrong side up, were made to accommodate the writings of the famous Syrian father, Efrem. It was, in short, what is known as a "palimpsest." The reading of the faded earlier writing was a matter of great difficulty, and more than a hundred years later the first brilliant exploit of the youthful Tischendorf was the full decipherment of this under writing. While many leaves of the original codex of the fifth century are missing, what remains is enough to make the Codex of Efrem a witness of great value to the ancient text of the New Testament.

The conquests of Napoleon brought from Rome to Paris a fourth-century manuscript of the Greek Bible which had lain for three hundred years almost unnoticed in the Vatican library. At Paris it came under the eye of one Leonhard Hug, who found it to contain a text of remarkable age and purity. This judgment of the worth of the Codex Vaticanus has been fully sustained by subsequent study of it; and it is generally

recognized as the most important known witness to the true text of the New Testament. After the fall of Napoleon it was returned to the Vatican library, of which it is now the chief glory, but its text is accessible to scholars in full photographic facsimile in the principal learned libraries of the world.

Less than a hundred years ago there was graduated from the University of Leipzig a man destined to play a notable part in bringing to light long-forgotten manuscripts of the New Testament. His name was Tischendorf. From his student days the revision of the Greek text and the search for new manuscripts to aid in it were his principal concerns. With prodigious energy he worked over manuscripts that were known and sought far and near for others. When he could command the necessary funds, he went in search of new manuscripts to Egypt and thence to Mount Sinai, and there in 1844, in the ancient Convent of St. Catharine, he found forty-three leaves of a magnificent old manuscript of the Old Testament in Greek, which were about to be thrown away. They were in such good condition that he felt sure there must be more of the manuscript somewhere about the convent, but he could find no trace of it, and

left Sinai with the forty-three leaves, which the monks gave him. They were part of a superb pandect of the fourth century, written in stately capital letters, usually with four narrow columns to the page.

Tischendorf could not shake off the conviction that the rest of this great manuscript must be somewhere about that convent, and once more in 1853 he made the costly and arduous journey to Mount Sinai to search for it, but without success. Again in 1859 he visited the convent, and made every effort to discover it in the convent library. He had given up the attempt and ordered his camels for the return to Suez, when, on the last evening of his stay, the steward of the convent took him to his cell and there showed him, wrapped up in a red cloth, the manuscript he had sought so long. Fearing that the manuscript might be taken from him next morning, Tischendorf sat up all that night copying from it the so-called "Epistle of Barnabas," no complete Greek text of which had before been found.

The Codex Sinaiticus, as it was called, proved to be a wonderfully valuable witness to the ancient New Testament text, being only a little inferior in age and purity to the Vatican manu-

script itself. As the Czar had been the patron of Tischendorf's last expedition, it was finally deposited in the imperial library at St. Petersburg. Tischendorf published its text in a stately edition printed from facsimile type, and a full photographic facsimile has been published by Professor Lake, who, after taking his photographs, left the manuscript still wrapped in the old red cloth in which Tischendorf had found it fifty years before.

On the summit of the little island of Patmos, off the west coast of Asia Minor, stands the old fortress-convent of St. John. In its little library there have been preserved for centuries thirty-three leaves of a sixth-century manuscript of the Greek gospels, written on purple-stained vellum. Other scattered leaves of this very manuscript are in the Vatican, in the National Library at Vienna, and in the British Museum. These leaves have been in Europe so long that it is not impossible that they were actually brought back from the East as relics or talismans by men returning from the Crusades. Together with those at Patmos, they made a total of only forty-five leaves known to be extant. But in 1896 representatives of the Czar of Russia secured in Cappadocia one hundred and eighty-two more

leaves, or the bulk of the identical manuscript from which the Patmos, Rome, Vienna, and London pieces had long ago been detached. Such are the vicissitudes through which some ancient manuscripts have passed.

Forty-five years ago, two young Leipzig scholars were on a vacation tour through Southern Italy. In Rossano, in Calabria, they found in the cathedral library a sixth-century manuscript of the gospels, written on purple vellum, and decorated with what proved to be the earliest known illustrations, or miniature paintings, of gospel scenes. Some years later a French officer found at Sinope, in Asia Minor, another illustrated purple manuscript of about the same date and style. The interest of the Rossano and Sinope manuscripts for early Christian art is of course very great.

When in 1897 the young Oxford scholars, Grenfell and Hunt, uncovered masses of ancient Greek papyri among the rubbish-heaps of Oxyrhynchus, in Egypt, they found a papyrus leaf of the Gospel of Matthew dating from the third century, the oldest bit of New Testament manuscript then known. Since then, several other third-century pieces, some of considerable size, have been found, helping to push our knowledge

of the text back almost to the days of Cyprian and Hippolytus.

In 1906 Mr. Charles L. Freer, of Detroit, while on a visit to Cairo, was shown a group of four biblical Greek manuscripts of the fifth and sixth centuries which had recently been found, probably in some ruined convent of the interior. One was a beautifully written manuscript of the four gospels, dating from the fifth century, but rebound probably in the eighth in covers of wooden board, richly decorated with the painted figures of the four evangelists. These paintings were in a remarkably good state of preservation. The text of the manuscript, too, was of extraordinary interest. With this beautiful manuscript was another, without covers, and indeed with hardly any semblance of a book. It was a mere shapeless, blackened mass, but when its leaves had been patiently separated with a knife, it proved to be a sixth-century manuscript, or what was left of it, of Paul's Epistles, and a veritable treasure to scholarship. Mr. Freer bought the manuscripts as they were and sent them to Detroit, where they were afterward deciphered and published by University of Michigan scholars. They are now in the Freer Gallery of the National Museum in Washington. They prob-

ably constitute the most important discovery of Greek biblical manuscripts that has been made since Tischendorf.

By such discoveries, the full story of which would make not a chapter but a whole volume, the materials for a better knowledge of the ancient Greek text of the New Testament have steadily increased for the past four hundred years. But this is not all. The New Testament was very early translated into Syriac, Latin, and certain dialects of Coptic, and later into Gothic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Persian. Manuscripts and printed editions of these ancient versions have appeared, and as Western scholars have become better acquainted with these languages and have learned better how to weigh the conflicting evidence of different manuscripts, these old versions have come to throw an important light upon the New Testament text, and supplement in a very helpful way the testimony of the Greek manuscripts. Each of them has its own story of romantic discovery, but far more of patient, painstaking labor with no reward but the consciousness that in some particulars here and there the true text of the New Testament was being made more certain. George Horner has published the text of the New Testament in

the Sahidic dialect—the Coptic of Upper Egypt, —basing his text upon more than a thousand manuscript fragments. Still more recently, an extraordinary find of Coptic manuscripts, made in 1910 and since purchased by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, has increased our materials for the text, especially of the Sahidic version, in an unprecedented way, and in 1923 there came to light a complete manuscript of the Gospel of John in a dialect of Coptic resembling the Akhmimic, which will make an important contribution to our knowledge of that imperfectly known version.

It is clear that, so far from everything about the text of the New Testament having been known four hundred years ago, we are still learning something new about it every year. Not a year passes that does not witness the discovery of new Greek manuscripts, or new materials for the correction and improvement of the published texts of the ancient versions. Scholars now know of twenty-five hundred Greek manuscripts of the New Testament or parts of it, one hundred and fifty of them uncials or capital-letter manuscripts dating from the third century to the ninth. Besides these there are fifteen hundred Greek manuscript lectionaries, or lesson-books, con-

taining the New Testament text, principally the gospels, arranged in the order in which it was read in church throughout the year. The entire number of Greek New Testament manuscripts, ranging from tiny fragments to complete texts, is fully four thousand. To these must be added the two Latin versions, the five Coptic versions, the six Syriac versions, each with its own manuscripts, and so on.

Upon this wealth of materials for the Greek text and for its various ancient translations a great amount of scholarly effort has been spent. Where Erasmus spent a few months of hasty work upon his editions, Tischendorf devoted virtually his entire life to the text of the New Testament, and Westcott and Hort worked over their edition of the Greek text twenty-eight years before publishing it. Dr. Westcott, it is true, did many other things in that period, but Dr. Hort made the study of the New Testament text his principal occupation during that time. The staggering mass of materials which we now possess for the recovery of the original New Testament text cannot be comprehended and digested without years of systematic work. No other body of literature has anything approaching its wealth of manuscript witnesses. Many

important works of classical or Christian literature have come down to us in only one, two, or three manuscript copies, and these are sometimes very late and inadequate. Against this faint background of late and meager manuscript evidence for much of our classical and early Christian literature, our knowledge of the Greek text of the New Testament stands out in dazzling relief. Every year adds to the number of its manuscripts, and contributes something to our better knowledge of the text. It would be difficult to overestimate the learning, patience, and skill that have been devoted to this study. As a result of it, we now possess a Greek Testament under every word of which there goes down a foundation of manuscript evidence fifteen hundred years deep into the past. We actually know today what Paul and the evangelists wrote, better than it has been possible for anyone to know it since the fourth century. To shut our eyes and ears to this better knowledge of the New Testament is as impossible as it would be to deny the existence of the automobile, the airplane, and the radio, and to insist upon living as though they had never been invented.

While discoveries and researches like these have given modern scholarship a much more cor-

rect Greek text to translate, advances no less remarkable have been made in the knowledge of Greek itself. The discovery in the nineteenth century of the method of comparative philology and the lifelong labors of many philologists and commentators have provided us with helps for the understanding of the Greek Testament undreamed of in the days of Tyndale or King James. The student of the Greek New Testament today has at his elbow an equipment of grammars, lexicons, concordances, and commentaries the poorest of which are better than the best ones known in their times. In the past sixteen years alone, six new lexicons of New Testament Greek have been produced, by Protestants and Catholics, in France, Germany, England, and America. It is doubtful whether William Tyndale possessed so much as one. Historical and archaeological researches of every kind have joined with philology to aid in the understanding of the New Testament and have put the modern student of it in a very advantageous position. His facilities for understanding its meaning are vastly greater than those of Tyndale or the scholars of King James.

VI

THE BETTER TEXT AND THE PRIVATE TRANSLATIONS

THE STORY of the private translations of the New Testament made between the appearance of the King James Version of 1611 and the English Revision of 1881 is a forgotten chapter in the history of the English Bible.

We have seen how under the shadow of the Authorized Version there began almost immediately to grow up a better knowledge of the true text of the New Testament, supported by discoveries of more ancient Greek manuscripts and of manuscripts of the ancient versions. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed the first publication of these versions, in editions, it is true, hastily prepared on the basis of a few manuscripts of no great antiquity. But the result was a decided and steady improvement in the printed editions of the Greek text. For a long time, indeed, the old text of Erasmus, reprinted with some modification by Estienne and Beza, held the field, the boldest scholar venturing to go no farther than to print at the foot of the

page a few readings of the older manuscripts, but even this was enough to show men of inquiring minds that the current printed text was far from sound, and could be improved. Richard Bentley, in 1720, asserted this in no uncertain language, but it was not until 1831 that a New Testament text based directly upon really ancient manuscripts, and not merely revised from the old current text of Erasmus, made its appearance, from the hand of Karl Lachmann. Since that time such editions have been frequent and the advance in the knowledge of the text has been great.

Not only the better knowledge of the text, but the consciousness of the disadvantages of the King James translation stirred men to retranslate the New Testament. The language of the King James Version was antique even when it appeared, for it was in reality the English of a hundred years before. That it was revised within four years of its publication clearly suggests this, and the efforts soon made at retranslation very definitely confirm it.

We have seen the New Testament of Tyndale passing in the course of a century through three notable revisions: the Great Bible, the Bishops' Bible, and the King James Bible. Had the same

interest in keeping the English Bible abreast of the times continued, there would have been little place for private translations. Indeed, plans for a new revision of the King James Bible were under consideration at the very time when the Commonwealth government collapsed and the Restoration of the Stuarts ensued. The following age had little interest in the revision of the Bible. It was the darkest period in the religious history of England, an age of religious decline, with a corrupt court, a dissolute nobility, and a worldly clergy. No wonder that such changes as anyone troubled to make in the English Bible were confined chiefly to modernizing its spellings.

It was probably the long-continued fixity of the King James Version in this age of disinterest in revision that made that version seem to the eighteenth-century leaders of church and state a literary and religious permanency, which it did not occur to them to alter. By their time it had for generations been hallowed by liturgical use, a literary preservative of the most potent kind. The keen practical interest which Tyndale's work and the Protestant Reformation had aroused in English translations of the Bible had waned.

Nevertheless, progress continued to be made

through the work of private individuals here and there. In 1718 Dr. Edward Wells published a Greek text "with a new translation and paraphrase of the Four Gospels and Acts." About the same time, a Roman Catholic priest, Cornelius Nary, published at Dublin a new translation of the New Testament made, like most Catholic versions, from the Latin Vulgate, but "with the original Greek diligently compared." But the first important work in this field was that of W. Mace, who in 1729 published at London the Greek New Testament with an original English translation.

In 1745 William Whiston, the successor of Sir Isaac Newton in the professorship of mathematics in the University of Cambridge, but best known nowadays as the translator of Josephus, published what he called *The Primitive New Testament.* This extraordinary work was further described as "an original version from the manuscript of Beza, the imperfections being supplied from the Vulgar Latin in part, and, for St. Paul's letters, from the Clermont manuscript, the rest from the Greek Alexandrian manuscript." It is perfectly clear that what moved Professor Whiston to translate was the difference he saw between the Greek text behind the King James

New Testament and that of these old manuscripts of the fifth and sixth centuries, and that he realized that the King James text was not the primitive one.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, private translations began to appear with some frequency. Of especial interest is the revised New Testament published in 1755 by John Wesley, "with notes for plain, unlettered men who understand only their mother tongue." These notes of Wesley's so overshadowed his revision that his work as a reviser is generally forgotten. Wesley was noted from his university days for his familiar use of the Greek New Testament, and his revision shows that he, like Whiston, knew the faultiness of the Greek text behind the King James Version.

American interest in the subject began, most appropriately, in 1776, when Samuel Mather published in Boston a new translation of the Gospel of Matthew.

In 1789–91, Gilbert Wakefield, once a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, published a translation remarkable for its freedom and force. He boldly recast the English forms of translation, relegated the verse numbers to the margin, and introduced a modern paragraphing. He saw and

expressed the correct meaning of many passages which are still usually mistranslated. Not only a better Greek text, but better actual knowledge of Greek idiom and a freedom and courage which few modern translators have equaled distinguish this work of Wakefield's.

In 1788 Principal George Campbell, of Aberdeen, published an original translation of the gospels, which had an interesting history. It was combined in 1818 with a translation of the epistles published in 1795 by James MacKnight, and a translation of the remaining parts of the New Testament made by Philip Doddridge. Afterward, in 1826, this work was re-edited, in Buffalo, Virginia, by Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Church of the Disciples of Christ, and was widely used by him in his ministry. At first under the title *The Sacred Writings* and later as *The Sacred Oracles*, this New Testament had a wide circulation in America. George Campbell's gospels were translated from the Greek text of the German scholar Griesbach, first published in 1774–77. Campbell abandoned the old verse division and numbering, substituting a free, intelligent paragraphing. Speaking in his Preface of retranslations of the Bible, he said: "It is remarkable that from the days of

Jerom to the present, the same terrible forbodings have always accompanied the undertaking, and vanished on the execution, insomuch that the fatal effects predicted have never afterward been heard of."

In 1796 William Newcome, an Oxford man, once the tutor of Charles James Fox, and later archbishop of Armagh, published "an attempt toward revising our English translation of the Greek scriptures," using the text of Griesbach, as Campbell had done. In 1798 Nathaniel Scarlett published in London what he called "a translation humbly attempted by Nathaniel Scarlett, assisted by men of piety and literature." Scarlett very properly criticized the King James Version for following too closely the Greek order of words. He saw that much of the New Testament was dialogue, but exaggerated this by treating it all as such, and placing before every utterance in italics the name of the speaker, as is done in Shakespeare.

In 1808, Charles Thomson, of Philadelphia, the secretary of the Continental Congress and the friend of Benjamin Franklin, published a translation of the Greek Bible. He was the first secretary of the Congress of the United States, and presented to General Washington the letter

informing him of his election to the presidency. Thomson once found in a bookstore in Philadelphia a part of the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament and became greatly interested in it. Long after, he succeeded in getting the rest of the version, and from it he produced the first English translation of that version. In undertaking his translation, he was influenced by a letter from Thomas Jefferson, and his New Testament has many excellencies.

Noah Webster, the maker of the famous dictionary, and in its day the even more influential speller, took a very serious interest in the revision of the Bible. In 1833 he produced at New Haven a complete revision of the King James Version, designed, as he said, to free it from words and expressions that had become obsolete, from grammatical errors, and from expressions repugnant to modern taste.

In 1836–37 Granville Penn published in London a new English version of the New Testament, "with the aid of most ancient manuscripts unknown to the age in which that version was last put forth authoritatively." At almost the same time, George Townsend published in Boston and Philadelphia a new version of the New Testament "arranged in chronological and his-

torical order." Samuel Sharp in 1840 published in London a new translation, from the Greek text of Griesbach. In 1842 Dr. Asahel C. Kendrick revised the New Testament as part of the Bible published by David Bernard in Philadelphia. In 1846–51, Bishop F. P. Kenrick published in New York a revision of the Roman Catholic version produced at Rheims in 1582, basing it, of course, upon the Latin Vulgate. But Challoner's thorough revision of 1749, which was much influenced by the King James Version, still remains the prevalent form of the Rheims-Douay New Testament.

From 1850 to 1870 the advance in knowledge of the ancient text of the New Testament was very marked. Henry Alford issued the first volume of his Greek Testament in 1849, and the last one in 1861. In 1853 Westcott and Hort quietly began work on their edition, but its publication in 1881 belongs to a later chapter. Tregelles, who more than anyone else brought the better knowledge of the text home to English scholars of the day, issued the first part of his Greek text in 1857, and other parts followed at intervals until 1872. Tischendorf's seventh edition, with the fullest list of readings from the manuscripts that had thus far been published,

appeared in 1859. His discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus in that year dramatically called attention to the advance being made in the knowledge of the New Testament text. The text of the Vatican manuscript now became more accurately known, and so Tischendorf had the invaluable aid of the two greatest New Testament manuscripts in producing his eighth edition, which appeared in 1864–72.

This great advance in the knowledge of the text is naturally reflected in the new translations. In 1855 Charles Eliot Norton, afterward professor in Harvard University, published from papers left by his father, Andrews Norton, a new translation of the four gospels, with notes. The American Bible Union, under the leadership of Dr. Thomas J. Conant, had assembled translation materials and in 1860 produced a new translation of the four gospels, and in 1865 a complete New Testament. In the same year H. T. Anderson published a translation at Louisville, Kentucky, and in 1869 Professor George R. Noyes, of Harvard University, published at Boston his *New Testament translated from the Greek Text of Tischendorf*.

Meanwhile important work was being done in England. In 1857–58 five scholars of the English

church, Alford, Moberly, Humphrey, Ellicott, and Barrow, produced a new revision of the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Romans, intending to show by it the errors of the King James Version and to prepare the way for a new revision. They followed this within four years with the other Epistles of Paul. Dean Alford, whose work upon the Greek text has already been mentioned, himself carried the experiment farther by publishing a revision of the whole New Testament in 1870, and in that year the English Revision was at last undertaken.

In the two hundred and fifty-nine years that had elapsed since the publication of the King James Version, nearly a hundred private revisions or retranslations of the Greek New Testament had been printed, more than half of them in the nineteenth century. Almost every Christian denomination had been represented, and almost every conceivable experiment in arrangement, paragraphing, and printing had been tried. Few if any of these numerous and usually intelligent attempts had any lasting success, but there can be no doubt that the agitation they reflect led directly to the great revision of 1870–81. Not a few of them were produced and published in the United States—in Boston, Philadelphia, New

Haven, New York, and Louisville. In 1876, while the English Revision was in progress, Julia Smith, a learned American woman, published at Hartford, Connecticut, a new translation of the entire Bible, from the original tongues.

Many of the translators were highly intelligent and influential men, leaders in church and state, whose vigorous and original minds saw the deficiencies of the current Authorized Version and, rising above conventional acquiescence in its use, courageously and diligently sought to improve upon it and to give to their contemporaries an English New Testament abreast of the best knowledge of their time.

Four things occasioned these attempts. Their makers knew that they possessed a better Greek text than had been known in 1611. They knew Greek better than it had been known then. They knew that the English of the Authorized Version, however plain the most of it may have been when Tyndale wrote it, was obscure and stilted to their own contemporaries, and they knew that the old verse division did savage and irrational violence to the writings of the New Testament.

It remains to see how far the English Revision met and satisfied these conditions.

VII

THE ENGLISH REVISION

WITH Dean Alford's new revision of 1870, we are on the threshold of the English Revision, for in that year it was undertaken, and on its New Testament Company were four of the five men who had collaborated a few years before in the new revision of the Gospel of John and the letters of Paul.

It was primarily the disagreement between what was already known to have been the true Greek text of the New Testament and that which underlay the Authorized Version that compelled the revision. Tregelles' critical edition of the Greek text, which began to appear in 1857, and Tischendorf's eight editions, the last beginning to appear in 1864, had familiarized English students of the New Testament with the great advances made in the knowledge of the ancient text, while the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus, in 1859, and its subsequent publication had made the shortcomings of the King James Version glaringly apparent. The publication, in 1865, of the American Bible Union version, com-

bined with the appearance of Alford's edition of 1870, gave further evidence of the deep and widespread dissatisfaction with the old version. The decisive step was taken by the Convocation of Canterbury, before the Upper House of which, on February 10, 1870, Bishop Wilberforce moved the consideration of the revision of the New Testament. The motion was amended to include the Old Testament, seconded by Bishop Ellicott, and adopted. On May 6, Convocation unanimously authorized the organization of a group of its members to associate with themselves any scholars they chose and undertake the work of revision. Seven men were appointed, and they invited more than twenty others of various denominations to join them. The New Testament Company began work on June 22, 1870. Two weeks later, the Convocation of Canterbury voted to "invite the co-operation of some American divines," and Dr. Joseph Angus was sent to America to make the arrangements. With the aid of Professor Philip Schaff, a representative American Company was formed and arrangements for systematic co-operation were effected.

The first task of the New Testament Company was to revise the text to be translated, and in this they were greatly helped by Dr. Westcott

and Dr. Hort, who had been at work for many years upon a thoroughgoing revision of the Greek text. Both were members of the Revision committee, and it became their custom to place in the hands of the revisers copies of the various parts of their Greek text as it was required. Although Westcott and Hort's New Testament in Greek did not appear until 1881, the revisers thus had the benefit of much of their results, but they did not by any means take full advantage of them.

Bishop Ellicott was chairman of the English Company almost from the beginning of its work, and the group of revisers usually numbered twenty-four. Their first principle was "to introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorized Version consistently with faithfulness." The revisers went over the whole New Testament twice. Their first revision was finished in six years, and their second in two and a half. Their practice was to meet for periods of some four days, each day's sitting lasting six hours. The work occupied four hundred and seven sessions. The New Testament was completed on November 11, 1880, and published in England on May 17 and in America on May 20, 1881.

The American New Testament Company organized by Dr. Schaff consisted of nineteen scholars of various denominations. It was a distinguished body, including such men as President Woolsey, Timothy Dwight, Professor Thayer, who afterward published the great New Testament lexicon, Professor Ezra Abbot, the leading American authority on the text, Professor Schaff, and Professor A. C. Kendrick, who had published a revised translation of the whole New Testament in 1842. The Company began its work in Bible House, New York, on October 4, 1872, when the tentative revision of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke prepared by the English Committee was placed in its hands for consideration. It was the custom of the Company to meet on the last Friday and Saturday of each month, when President Woolsey would read verse by verse the passage assigned for the day, Bishop Lee reading each verse after him from the King James Version, and discussion would follow. The results were forwarded to the English Committee and considered by them in their second revision, which was in turn sent to the American Company and reported on by them. The American suggestions accepted in the text or the margin of the English Revision were esti-

mated by Bishop Lee at one thousand. It was further agreed that other important readings preferred by the American Company should be embodied in an Appendix to the English Revision. Most of the preferred readings listed in this Appendix strike the modern American student of the New Testament as decided improvements upon the English Revision. The American revisers were further committed not to put forth a separate edition of a revised New Testament until fourteen years had passed. As the revised Old Testament did not appear until 1885, this really postponed the possibility of an American Revision until 1899, and it did in fact appear in 1901.

The English Revision had been eagerly expected, and was given an extraordinary welcome, both in England and in America. Three million copies were sold within a year. The American interest was intense. The *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Times* published the full revision in their issues of May 22, two-thirds of the text being telegraphed from New York for the purpose. While much fault was found with the revision, it made a great impression, and was a notable advance upon the King James Version, which it has now displaced in public use

even in Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.

Of one thing at least the English revisers were convinced: the old verse paragraphing had to go. This was undoubtedly a great advance. The revisers substituted a sense paragraphing, which in their revulsion against King James they carried too far. In place of too many paragraphs, they used too few. This gave their printed page the appearance of long, solid passages of argumentative discourse, appropriate enough in the epistles, but altogether out of keeping with the contents of the gospels and the Acts, which, as Gilbert Wakefield long before had seen, are often conversational in form, and really call for a paragraphing as open as any in King James. The fault of the Authorized Version was not that it used too many paragraphs, but that it made no serious effort to make the paragraphing fit the sense. To a less extent, the revisers fell into the same error, though in another form.

The revisers shook off the dreadful mass of technical accretions which had gathered about the King James Version, and for most of which its original makers must not be held responsible. The vast tangle of marginal references with which a mistaken ingenuity had literally smoth-

ered its pages was, at first at least, dispensed with, and the New Testament was for a time trusted to speak for itself.

The principal improvement made in the revision was in the better Greek text upon which it was based. Here the advance upon King James was marked. Yet when it is remembered that the revisers had the benefit of the researches of Westcott and Hort, and of their expert judgment of readings, one is surprised that the improvement in the underlying text was not greater. But it must be remembered that in the first stage of the English Revision it required a majority vote to carry a change from King James, and in the second stage a two-thirds vote. The difficulty of making men not expert in textual criticism feel the force of textual facts is seen in the revisers' marginal note on John 7:53: "Most of the ancient authorities omit John 7:53—8:11." Yet the Revision printed the passage as part of the text, set off only by brackets and a space of three lines before and after. The reader naturally wonders why, if most of the ancient authorities omitted the passage, it was left in the text, and concludes that the omitting authorities must have been the poorer ones. But as a matter of fact they were the best ones, and one can only

marvel at the textual method which inserted in the Gospel of John a paragraph which all scholars agree formed no part of it and in support of which only one Greek manuscript can be cited before the eighth century and only one Greek writer before the tenth.

Nor did the Company feel, with so many of the private translators who had preceded it, that the antiquated English of the time of Henry VIII was unsuited to the New Testament. On the contrary, they preferred it. This is the more surprising when we remember how many of the private translators had boldly abandoned it for a more modern and intelligible English style. The second of the principles of the revisers was to limit as far as possible the expression of their alterations to the language of the Authorized and earlier English versions. This necessarily hampered the revisers and greatly limited the range of progress possible for them. It committed them to making the diction of their revision as antique as that of King James or more so, and this must explain such expressions as "by the space of forty days" for the Authorized Version's "forty days" in Acts 1:3. They conceived their task as the retouching of an old portrait, not the painting of a new one.

In its day the Revision seemed an epoch-making forward step, but the modern student is principally impressed with its extreme caution. Even where the English feeling of the King James Version was glaringly at fault, the revisers did not venture to correct it, and sometimes where its instinct for sound English had been alert, they turned away from it. Strangely enough, it was the most important voice of all, the voice of a sound sense for English, that was least heard in the revisers' councils.

The Revised Version brought the English New Testament abreast of what was known in the seventies of the better text. It corrected many manifest errors in the old version in paragraphing and translation. It left off the liturgical conclusion which had crept into the Lord's Prayer, introduced the Hebrew names of the prophets, cleared away from the epistles the misleading accretions as to place of composition and the like, separated "Anathema" from "Maranatha" in First Corinthians, and relieved First John and the Revelation of Erasmus' additions to the text. But its chief contribution was not so much in what it accomplished as in what it implied, for it authoritatively declared that there was room for improvement on the Authorized

Version, and that the day of its domination was over. The Revised Version thus opened the way for further revision and retranslation, and in effect enfranchised the private translations that were to follow.

VIII

THE GREEK PAPYRI AND THE VERNACULAR NEW TESTAMENT

IN 1863, when Lightfoot was a young instructor in Cambridge, he remarked to his students that if we could only recover letters that ordinary people wrote to each other in New Testament times, they would be of the greatest possible assistance to us in understanding the language of the New Testament. There did not seem to be the least prospect of the realization of this wish when he expressed it, indeed, the very suggestion may then have seemed a gratuitous bit of fancy. But the papyrus discoveries of the past generation have abundantly proved that Bishop Lightfoot was right; and today scholarship finds something almost prophetic in his words. The papyri have, indeed, gone far beyond his estimate in their contribution to New Testament study, and some account of their discovery and significance claims a place in the story of the development of the English New Testament, for it is their evidence that within the past thirty years has transformed our ideals of translation.

The truth is, even when Lightfoot made the remark, Greek papyri of the very age and kind he described had already been discovered and were beginning to be published from the collections of London, Paris, and Turin. But they aroused little interest and had not come to the notice of even so great a scholar as Lightfoot.

When the books of the New Testament were written, papyrus had been for centuries the writing-material of Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean world. Made from the pith of the water plant from which it takes its name, it was practical and abundant. It was made by laying strips of the papyrus pith side by side, a second layer being laid over the first and at right angles to it, and the whole pressed and probably pasted together to form a sheet usually about six by nine or ten inches in size. Such sheets could be pasted together to make a roll of any desired length, fifteen to thirty feet being a convenient length for a roll for literary use. Only one side of a roll would ordinarily be used, the back being left blank. A finished roll, when tucked into the pigeonhole which was the unit of the ancient bookcase, had attached to it a slip of papyrus bearing its name. This slip was called a syllabus.

While papyrus was widely used in the Med-

iterranean world, it is only in the interior of Egypt that climatic conditions have permitted its preservation in any considerable quantities. Along the sides of the Nile Valley there are sometimes levels of earth so placed as to lie above the ground-damp spreading from the river and yet below the reach of the air-damp from the very infrequent rain. Papyri or mummies found in such levels are well preserved.

The first discovery of Greek papyri was not made in Egypt, but in Italy. In one of the ruined houses uncovered in the excavation of Herculaneum, near Naples, from 1752 on, was found the library of an Epicurean philosopher, which had been overwhelmed by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. The most of Herculaneum had been covered with molten lava, but this part of it was covered with hot ashes. These had charred the papyrus rolls in this old library, but had preserved them in that condition so perfectly that by an ingenious mechanism they can be unrolled upon paste-covered muslin and rendered permanently decipherable. Much was expected from the Herculanean rolls when the first publication of them appeared. This expectant attitude is finely expressed in some lines of Wordsworth:

O ye who patiently explore
The wreck of Herculanean lore,
What rapture, could ye seize
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted scroll
Of pure Simonides!

But the Herculanean finds were disappointing. They consisted for the most part of Epicurean philosophical works of no great interest. The most delightful thing found among them was a copy of a letter from Epicurus to a child, written probably about 275 B.C. It ran thus:

We have arrived in health at Lampsacus, myself and Pythocles and Hermarchus and Ctesippus, and there have found Themistas and the rest of the friends in health. It is good if you also are in health and your grandmother, and obey your grandfather and Matron in all things as you have done before. For be sure, the reason why I and all the rest love you so much is that you obey them in all things.

The first recorded discovery of Greek papyri in Egypt was in 1778, when a group of natives, in digging, probably in the Fayum, chanced upon a mass of forty or fifty papyrus rolls. Having no idea of the value of their discovery, they are said to have burned the rolls for the aromatic odor they exhaled, though as a matter of fact, burning papyrus is anything but aromatic. Long-buried papyrus has very much the color of

tobacco, and the rolls may have looked to their finders like some kind of giant cigars. One only of the Fayum rolls was preserved. It proved to be a document of 191 A.D. relating to work upon the Nile embankments. It is now in the Naples Museum.

It was not until 1820 that another important discovery of Greek papyri was made in Egypt. This was near the site of the Serapeum, or temple of Serapis, at Sakkarah, the ancient Memphis. Here native diggers unearthed a mass of Greek papyri mostly from the second century before Christ, many of them relating to the temple itself. Through the hands of dealers these passed into the museums of London, Paris, Leyden, Rome, and Dresden.

The next great find was that of 1877. It was made on the site of the ancient Arsinoe, in the Fayum, sixty or seventy miles southwest of Cairo. In that fertile region the second Ptolemy had settled his Macedonian veterans, and a pure Greek population had arisen, which read the Greek classics and used Greek in all the intercourse of daily life. Greek communities arose all over Egypt, and for a thousand years, or until after the Arab conquest, Greek was spoken and written in Egypt, side by side with the native

language. The literary appreciation of these Greeks may be gathered from the range of literary works in prose and poetry which had disappeared from Europe and have come down to us only through the papyri.

The Arsinoe find of 1877 contained few literary pieces. It consisted almost entirely of private documents, which found their way into the great collection formed by the Archduke Rainer at Vienna.

In 1889–90, the first discovery of Greek papyri by archaeologists was made by Professor Flinders Petrie, of London. Digging at Gurob, in the Fayum, he found mummies of the Ptolemaic period with breast-pieces, sandals, and headpieces made of papyrus cartonnage, that is, old waste papyri had been glued together into a sort of pasteboard, and this had been whitened over and painted in appropriate mortuary designs. By soaking this cartonnage, the pieces which formed it could be recovered, and these were sometimes in very good condition. The Petrie Papyri, as they were called, aroused great interest because they came from Ptolemaic times and because of the remarkable literary pieces among them.

Greek papyri continued to be found at inter-

vals by native diggers, and many literary pieces of great value found their way into the British Museum collections, and were edited by Sir Frederic G. Kenyon. Among these hitherto lost works of classical literature were the *Mimes* of Herondas, the orations of Hypereides, the rival of Demosthenes, the poems of Bacchylides, and the work of Aristotle *On the Constitution of Athens*.

Near the modern town of Behnesa, in Upper Egypt, Grenfell and Hunt in 1897 did their first serious excavating for papyri. Professor Flinders Petrie had begun work upon the site, but, finding its remains to be Graeco-Roman in date, he turned it over to the young Oxford men who were with him, and went elsewhere. Grenfell and Hunt had the extraordinary good fortune to find among the rubbish-heaps of the old town, which was called Oxyrhynchus, the contents of the Roman record office, which had been cleared out in early Christian times, when the old papers were carried outside the town and piled up to be burned. The fire evidently went out without consuming all of them, and the sand blew over the neglected heap and preserved it so perfectly that in some cases Grenfell's men carried the papyri to his camp in the very baskets in

which the Romans centuries before had sent them out to be burned.

The Oxyrhynchus discoveries aroused greater interest than any previous papyrus finds had done, partly because they included some early Christian pieces of great importance, chief among them the Sayings of Jesus and a fragment of the Gospel of Matthew dating from the third century. As a result, a special department of the Egypt Exploration Fund, the Graeco-Roman Branch, was organized, and the publication of the papyri discovered by Grenfell and Hunt at Oxyrhynchus and other sites has been systematically carried forward, until more than twenty quarto volumes of texts have appeared, of which the Oxyrhynchus Papyri now compose sixteen. Other volumes of texts from their hands increase this total to thirty volumes, the whole the massive contribution of two devoted scholars to the new field of papyrology.

The Logia, or Sayings of Jesus, is probably the most famous of all papyrus discoveries. It is a single leaf, measuring about four inches by six, from a papyrus book written about 200 A.D. It contains a series of Sayings, each introduced with the words "Jesus says." The fifth is the most striking:

Jesus says: Wherever there are two, they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there you will find me; cut the wood and there I am.

Returning to Oxyrhynchus in 1903, Grenfell and Hunt had a second successful season, finding among other things another papyrus of Sayings of Jesus. It is probable that both these papyri are collections of extracts from some local Egyptian gospel, probably that known as the "Gospel according to the Hebrews."

Excavating an ancient cemetery at Tebtunis, in the Fayum, in 1900, Grenfell and Hunt at first found the site disappointing. It yielded nothing but mummified crocodiles, the crocodile having been especially venerated in that part of Egypt. At last one of the workmen in vexation struck one of these with his mattock, and broke it open, disclosing the fact that underneath its outer covering it was wrapped from head to tail in papyrus. All the crocodiles previously unearthed were at once examined, and an extraordinary find of papyri, Greek and Egyptian, from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods was the result.

While at work in the Fayum in 1902–3, Grenfell was approached by a native dealer with pa-

pyri for sale. After buying these, Grenfell inquired as to their source and was directed to a site near Hibeh, in Upper Egypt, to which he immediately transferred his operations. The place had previously been ransacked by native diggers for what they described as *wushash waraq*, "faces of paper," or mummy cartonnage. But Grenfell and Hunt found many burials still undisturbed, a single tomb yielding twenty-nine mummies, fourteen of them with papyrus cartonnage. From some graves half-explored by the earlier commercial diggers, the excavators actually obtained the other halves of six or seven papyri which they had bought from Cairo dealers in 1896. The Hibeh find was especially rich in papyri of the Ptolemaic period.

For many years Grenfell and Hunt spent their winters in Egypt excavating and their summers in Oxford editing their results. Excavation for papyri was occasionally undertaken by other archaeologists. In 1902, Borchardt found at Abusir part of a papyrus roll of the lost *Persians* of Timotheus, who had until then been only a name in the annals of Greek literature. This roll dates from the end of the third century before Christ, and may fairly be described as the oldest Greek book in the world. It is old enough

to have been actually used by the great choruses which rendered the poems of Timotheus in the days of Alexander the Great.

Most literary papyri found turn out to be fragments of Homer—a fresh evidence of the great hold the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had upon the ancient world. These have carried our knowledge of the Homeric text back a full thousand years. Of course many fragments of other Greek authors already familiar to Western learning have come to light. Greater interest attaches to the lost works of Greek literature which the papyri have restored to us in whole or in part. New historical works have been found, and new poems of Alcman and of Sappho, one of them, relating to her brother, beginning:

> Sweet Nereids! grant to me
> That home unscathed my brother may return,
> And every wish for which his heart may yearn
> Accomplished see.

Especial interest attaches to the recovery of scenes from the lost comedies of Menander, in whose plays, as some one has said, love took permanent possession of the stage, and of whom Aristophanes of Byzantium exclaimed, "O Menander! O Life! Which of you copied the other?" Even the beginnings of the novel are traceable in

the literary remains which the papyri have disclosed.

Of the great masses of papyri already discovered, only 2 or 3 per cent are literary. The vast bulk of them are private documents of endless variety—letters, invitations, petitions, contracts, deeds, leases, lists, tickets, accounts, birth notices, death notices, complaints, reports, receipts, wills, marriage agreements, divorces, legal proceedings, questions to the oracles, and so on. The complexity of ancient business life reflected in these papers is little short of amazing. The personal letters give us quaint glimpses of family life. Eighteen hundred years ago a little boy of Oxyrhynchus wrote thus to his father:

> Theon to his father Theon, greeting. It was a fine thing of you not to take me with you to the city! If you won't take me along with you to Alexandria, I won't write you a letter, or speak to you, or say goodbye to you, and if you go to Alexandria, I won't take your hand or ever greet you again! That is what will happen if you won't take me! And my mother said to Archelaus, "He upsets me! Take him away!" It was fine of you to send me presents! great ones! shucks! They fooled us there, on the twelfth, the day you sailed. Well, send for me, I implore you! If you don't, I won't eat, I won't drink! There!

In this great mass of documents, we have what we have never had before: a sight of the

everyday life and speech of the ancient Greeks. We have had their philosophies, histories, orations, poems, and plays, but never an actual glimpse of their ordinary life and speech. The Greek papyri have disclosed these to us fully and clearly, as they were in New Testament times. We know at last how the ordinary Greek expressed himself when off his guard, in his business papers and his family correspondence. And, to our surprise, this colloquial Greek is the Greek in which the New Testament is written.

We have long known that the language of the New Testament was not classical Greek, or even the literary Greek of its own day. Nor is it the "biblical" Greek of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. But we have had no means of knowing just what it really was, until the discovery of the Greek papyri in the past thirty years. These have proved that it is the vernacular Greek of its time. The New Testament is written in the language of everyday life. Upon this, New Testament grammarians, British, continental, and American, liberal and conservative alike, agree.

It is no reflection upon the revisers of 1881 or the American revisers whose work appeared in 1901 to say that they did not know this. They

did not know the automobile, the airplane, or the radio. The new knowledge of the true character of New Testament Greek was just as unknown then as were these great modern discoveries, to which none of us shuts his eyes. It is as real a discovery as any of these. We possess in this new knowledge of the Greek papyri an approach to the language of the New Testament sounder than anything known not only to Tyndale and the King James revisers, but to the British and American revisers of a generation ago. And the fact that they did not have it is no more reason for our acting as though we did not, than their ignorance of the typewriter or the telephone would be for our refusing to make use of these things.

That the New Testament was written in common speech is confirmed by its leading writer, the apostle Paul himself. The Corinthians complained that his speech was rude; they wished him to speak and write more elegantly. His reply was that he would never resort to literary embellishments, lest they should distract attention from the matter of his message, which he described as "Christ crucified." The papyri have risen from the sands of Egypt to prove that Paul meant what he said. He was not interested in

writing "literature," but only in presenting his gospel in the plainest, most straightforward language he could command. The humble circumstances of most of the early Christians, reflected in many parts of the New Testament made this course natural and almost inevitable. Early Christian literature began not with history or even with sermons, but with personal letters, always the most informal type of written expression.

When this fact is grasped, a new light at once dawns upon the rise of Christianity. No wonder its message and then its writings so swiftly and powerfully reached the masses of the ancient world. They were expressed in the simple, straightforward language of everyday life, which everybody understood and used. One did not need a university education to read them. Tyndale was right in trying to make the New Testament intelligible to the plowboys of England. Its first public had been the plain, working people of the ancient world.

The bearing of this new fact upon New Testament translation begins a new chapter in the progress of the English New Testament.

IX

THE MODERN-SPEECH TRANSLATIONS

THE British Revision of 1881 aroused the utmost interest. The bitter attacks made upon it in some quarters were more than outweighed by the warmth of its welcome in others. Great names, official sanction, and long preparation were behind it and gave prestige to what was undoubtedly a movement in the right direction.

The same year witnessed an event less conspicuous, but of no less moment, in the publication of a new Greek text of the New Testament, edited by Westcott and Hort. For nearly thirty years this great work had been in preparation, and it was executed with such boldness and skill that although more than forty years have passed since its appearance, the Christian public has not yet caught up with it. While both its editors were members of the New Testament Revision Company, the Revision was far from taking full advantage of their work. The members of the American Company were more nearly in sympathy with the results of Westcott and Hort

than their English colleagues, as their text, which appeared twenty years later, shows.

Not only had the revisers failed to take advantage of the better knowledge of the Greek text which the centuries had brought, but they clung with mistaken devotion to the antiquated diction of Henry VIII. Their lifelong familiarity with the old version blinded them to its obscurities, or rather actually transformed these into beauties—a very common experience. So very sparing were the revisers in their alterations that it may still be said of their New Testament, as of that of the King James, that William Tyndale wrote the most of it.

In these circumstances it is not strange that the stream of private translations shows little diminution after the appearance of the Revision. New translations appeared in London in 1881 and in Albany, New York, in 1882. In 1883 Ferrar Fenton published in London the beginning of his interesting version, *Paul's Epistles in Modern English from the Original Greek*. In 1895 he published a complete New Testament, and in 1900 the whole Bible. The vigor and freshness of many of his renderings attracted a wide circle of readers. In 1885 W. D. Dillard published in Chicago a New Testament which he described

as "literally translated out of the Greek," and "dedicated to the poor, illiterate, and unlearned of my fellowcountrymen," but the work is really only a halting revision of the King James Version. American interest in the subject found further expression in 1898 in a new translation of the gospels from the Greek text, by Francis A. Spencer, a learned Roman Catholic. Cardinal Gibbons himself supplied the preface, in which he said: "In preparing this version of the Gospels it has been the translator's aim throughout to make use of idiomatic English as far as the character of the New Testament and the style of the original text permit. He has endeavored to represent Our Lord and the Apostles as speaking, not in an antique style, but in the language they would speak if they lived among us now." In 1899 F. S. Ballentine published in New York a translation of the gospels, as part of a projected *Modern American Bible*, and in the same year the parts of the *Twentieth Century New Testament* began to appear. This was the work of a number of scholars, and its combination of sound learning and freedom of expression made its appearance a notable event in the history of modern translations. In contrast with the revisers of 1881, its translators made a constant effort "to

exclude all words and phrases not used in current English." It was their belief "that the New Testament would be better understood by modern readers if presented in a modern form." In 1900 Ferrar Fenton's Bible was published in London, and in 1901 appeared the American Revision, embodying the readings preferred by the American Company but not admitted to the text by the more cautious English Company in the Revised Version of 1881.

The American Revision was much more courageous in following the better knowledge of the Greek text, and in its translations it was also a little less hampered by conservatism. In the New Testament it is certainly a marked improvement upon the English Revision. It assumed the name of the American Standard Version and has exerted a great influence for the better understanding of the Bible.

The American Standard was of course not a retranslation, but only a revision, and retained most of the quaint, old-fashioned diction which people had mistakenly come to identify with the Bible. Its paragraphing was like that of the English Revision, but it made the mistake of printing the old verse-numbers scattered through the text, so that unless systematically disre-

garded they absurdly interrupt it. The old habit of treating the Bible like a schoolbook was still too strong. But it must be remembered that the American Standard represents not the state of American opinion in 1901, but that of more than twenty years earlier, when the Greek papyri and their bearing upon the problem were still unknown.

The new knowledge of the really colloquial character of New Testament Greek began to come out, however, in the last years of the nineteenth century, and by the beginning of the new century that influence was making itself felt. The *Twentieth Century New Testament* of 1899–1900 had felt it, and it colored most of the translations of the quarter-century that followed. In 1901 Professor James Moffatt published in Edinburgh his *Historical New Testament*, with the several books newly translated and arranged in chronological order. In 1903 Richard Francis Weymouth published in London the *New Testament in Modern Speech*, "an idiomatic translation into every-day English." Weymouth's translation, while much less informal than its title suggests, has been widely used and has exerted a great influence. American activity became increasingly marked. In 1902 W. B. Godbey pub-

lished a new translation at Cincinnati. In 1904 A. S. Worrell published a very original and intelligent translation in Louisville, Kentucky. Further American versions rapidly followed, in Perkiomen, Pennsylvania (1909), in Philadelphia, (the University New Testament, 1909), in Aurora, Illinois (1914), in New Haven, Connecticut (1914), in Cincinnati (1918), the last translated from the Codex Sinaiticus. In 1912 the American Bible Union, which had published a revised English version in 1865, issued what was described as "an improved version."

In 1913 Professor Moffatt published a new translation which has been very widely used, especially by students. The realization that revision was not enough, that the New Testament must be retranslated if it is to reach the modern reader with anything like the force it had in antiquity, marks all these recent efforts, as does the consciousness that the only appropriate vehicle for such retranslation is the common vernacular English of everyday life. In 1919 Professor Charles F. Kent published the *Shorter New Testament*, a skilful retranslation of the more vital parts of the books of the New Testament. The old chapter and verse divisions were boldly abandoned, but the large omissions, which

were not indicated to the reader, somewhat limited the usefulness of the work. In 1919 a very earnest group of Bible students at Los Angeles produced a translation of the Acts, the epistles, and the Revelation, "The Concordant Version," upon principles of their own, and from a Greek text which they have prepared from the Vatican, Sinaitic, and Alexandrian manuscripts. Their text and translation of the gospels are soon to appear.

In 1922 Chaplain F. S. Ballentine, who had issued a New Testament in 1902, published what he described as "a plainer Bible for plain people in plain American." About the same time, Dr. Ernest A. Bell, the minister of the Night Church in Chicago, published in pamphlet form *The Gospel of John, translated and arranged for American Readers*, in order to have an intelligible form of that Gospel to distribute to those whom he was seeking to reach in his ministry. These attempts reflect the feeling of men in active religious work that current translations were not in plain enough English to reach ordinary people.

In 1923 Professor William G. Ballantine published the *Riverside New Testament: a translation from the original Greek into the English of Today*. Professor Ballantine wisely abandoned the verse

divisions altogether, but retained and exaggerated the chapter divisions, which are really just as bad, as far as they go, and often rudely interrupt the text. Professor Ballantine could not wholly forget the King James English, always the hardest and yet the most important thing for the modern translator to do. In the same year I published *The New Testament: An American Translation*, basing it upon the text of Westcott and Hort and using the familiar, common speech of present-day American life. It was published serially in a score of American newspapers. Mrs. Helen Barrett Montgomery published in that year, at Philadelphia, a new and attractive translation of the gospels, the first instalment of a complete New Testament translation which she has since brought out. And under Roman Catholic auspices a group of Jesuit scholars is producing at London a new translation of the Bible from the Hebrew and Greek, with a commentary, under the name of the *Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures*.

This record, which makes no claim of completeness, will at least suggest the amount of energy which has in recent years gone into New Testament translation. A part of it may have been done in a partisan or apologetic spirit, but

no one can examine it without feeling that the great mass of it aims solely at finding and expressing the real meaning of the New Testament itself. And the influence exerted on it by the new knowledge of the papyri is unmistakable.

At no time in the history of English-speaking Christianity has this effort been so widespread and sustained as during the past quarter-century. Since 1900, twenty-five revisions or new translations of the New Testament have appeared, three-fifths of them in the United States. This is not strange when it is remembered that there are more readers of the English Bible in America than in any other country. There can be no impropriety in attempting to enable American users of the New Testament to read it each of them in his own tongue wherein he was born, without having first to turn back and master the English of Henry VIII.

X

THE ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT TODAY

THE flight of four centuries has greatly changed the position of things with regard to the English New Testament. It is no longer a criminal offense to own or read one. On the contrary, it is the most widely circulated book in the English language. The phraseology which Tyndale worked out in obscurity and peril still lives in nine-tenths of the King James New Testament, and in more than half of the English and American revisions.

The last century has brought us far more accurate knowledge of the true text of the Greek Testament, and vastly better aids for its understanding and translation. The New Testament student today has an arsenal of grammars, lexicons, concordances, commentaries, and translations within reach. He has, besides, a historical sense of the meaning of interpretation which greatly clarifies his work. He sees, as former centuries did not, that the task of the translator is to express the meaning of the individual writer

he is translating, with all the clearness and candor of which the translator is capable, whether he himself agrees with it or not. Any other method, of course, simply forces the ancient writer to agree with the translator. The modern translator seeks what the ancient writer meant to say, with the same detachment with which a chemist looks at his test tube, or the biologist looks through his microscope. His aim is not to buttress a theology, but to find out what each New Testament writer had to tell.

The text, equipment, and attitude of the modern student thus combine to place him in a very advantageous position to translate the New Testament. But in addition to this, the road has been broken for him by a host of predecessors. The Greek New Testament began to experience translation as early as the beginning of the third century, and men have been translating it almost ever since. There are dozens of ancient versions and hundreds of modern ones. It has been translated or revised in English a hundred and fifty times since William Tyndale, twenty-five of these in the past twenty-five years, and fifteen of these last twenty-five in the United States. The modern translator has much to learn from this cloud of witnesses: much to imitate

and much to avoid. Among them they have tried almost every conceivable way of translating, arranging, paragraphing, annotating, and printing.

The Greek papyri discovered in the past forty years have thrown an unexpected light upon the subject by revealing the colloquial character of New Testament Greek. The inference is irresistible. If the New Testament was written in colloquial style, it must be translated into a colloquial style. No other style has any status any longer, for any other style must be in so far a misrepresentation of the original. A translation which is faithful in its individual parts but unfaithful in its total impression is wrong in principle. And this has been the greatest weakness of translators. They have been more concerned with words than with phrases, with clauses than with sentences, with verses than with paragraphs. The test of a book is not a line here and there, but coherence, movement, action; not how easily we may pull it to pieces, and what interesting pieces it makes, but how it first interests us, then absorbs us, and finally sweeps us along. It is safe to say that the fine old versions of other centuries have completely lost this quality. By "reading" them we only mean now and then struggling through a chapter or two with wan-

dering minds. Any serious enjoyment of a whole book, like Romans, which can be read in half an hour, is impossible with them.

But it was for this continuous reading that the New Testament was written, and it was in a style that made continuous reading easy. The Greek Christian of the second century had no more readable books in his world than the gospels and Acts. Any one of them he could read aloud in an afternoon or an evening. The epistles were harder, but even they were much less difficult than our antique versions have made them appear. The papyri have pointed the modern translators back to the colloquial style of the Greek New Testament, a much more difficult style to translate in than the dictionary English which has so long been the fashionable vehicle for the New Testament. "Ink-horn terms to be avoided," wrote old Bishop Cox to Archbishop Parker when they were at work on the Bishops' Bible; and the modern translator knows what he meant.

When the Greek Testament was new, it did not make upon its public an impression of antique stiffness, but of flexible familiarity. It was easy and natural in style; it said things plainly and directly, in the kind of speech men used to

one another in business or at home. And if we expect it to make upon present-day people such an impression as it made then, we may well try the experiment of putting it forth in the kind of style it was written in—the common vernacular diction of everyday life. This is no sensational or eccentric course; it is the only course now open to any serious-minded translator acquainted with the philological facts.

Every English New Testament is a translation. Yet many people think of the King James Version as the original Bible; anything which deviates from it, whether it be earlier or later, must be wrong. This familiar attitude has arisen from the long-unchallenged sway of the King James Bible, which has led to a sort of literary sclerosis. The Bible has as it were petrified before our eyes. It has assumed a fixity which many persons insist must be eternal. Things once perhaps quite clear in it have become obscure with age, and these very obscurities have become so familiar that they are often actually mistaken for beauties. Efforts of the old translators to modernize the Bible and bring it up to date with their times are mistaken for poetical touches, and the whole mass of antique diction, mostly dating from the time of Henry VIII, is

conceived to be somehow "Bible language." The effect of this is to submerge completely the styles of Matthew, John, and Paul under this sixteenth-century diction, which covers them all so thickly that their distinctive qualities of style are almost invisible. Not only are the individual styles lost and blurred together, but the general colloquial tone of the Greek New Testament wholly disappears. To crown all, this literary disaster, which in exchange for the Greek New Testament has given us a literary curiosity of the sixteenth century is defended in the name of English literature and liberal culture.

But the fact is, the New Testament was written in Greek, and was famous and influential before the English language was thought of. Its most famous English translation is no doubt an English classic, but that is a mere incident in its great history. Its versions have shaped other literatures besides English. The distinctive thing about the New Testament is that it is the world's greatest book of religion, and its translations must be judged by this standard: Do they give the fullest possible expression to its unique religious genius? To nine-tenths of its public, this matters vastly more than its curious interest as a monument of antique English style.

Now, whatever may have been the case in the days of Tyndale or King James, today their versions fall far short of carrying the color, meaning, or emphasis of the Greek New Testament. The old Authorized Version is no longer read, in any grown-up sense of that word. People may pick out a verse here or there, or even struggle through a chapter, but to read it comprehendingly, fifty pages at a time, as we all read modern books, is out of the question. They cannot do it. Nor are the guarded revisions of it, the English Revised and the American Standard, appreciably more readable. They were committed to its antique style, and that is just the barrier to the modern reader. In justice to the makers of them it must be remembered that they were made before anyone knew that the original style of the New Testament was colloquial. But when that fact is grasped, the way immediately opens for a New Testament that can be continuously and understandingly read, very much as the original New Testament was when it was new.

Modern feeling particularly resents the grotesque ways of printing the Bible employed by both Authorized and Revised versions. Printing can do much to make a book intelligible and attractive, and why should not the Bible and its

readers enjoy these advantages? The great modern champion of reform in this direction was the late Richard Green Moulton, whose *Modern Reader's Bible* has done great service in reminding people that the books of the Bible are best approached one by one, and in presenting them attractively and appropriately printed. If we really wish to have the Bible generally read and understood, the necessity of this course is plain. It is a strange devotion to the Bible that would saddle upon it a mass of needless mechanical disadvantages which have not even the warrant of the seventeenth century. Professor Moulton showed what could be done in this direction with the text of the English Revision of 1881, by means of an intelligent paragraphing that fitted the sense and literary character of the text. Why should not the conversational character of the Gospel of John, for example, be brought out in printing, just as is done in printing modern books? The effect is to make the page clearer, more inviting, and more intelligible. We have not hesitated to apply printing to the Bible; why not, then, the best methods of printing? What book is better entitled to them than the Bible?

The Greek papyri have awakened us to the

worship of the old letter to which the long predominance of the King James Version had led, and which the appearance of the English and American revisions simply emphasized. The discovery of the colloquial character of the original New Testament has brought home to present-day students the realization of how far the ordinary New Testament of today is from the kind of book the New Testament was when it was written, and how different an impression it gives. The papyri have recalled us to the ideals of the early translators, who worked to give uneducated people an intelligible Bible: Purvey, who heard "the unlearned cry after Holy Writ to know it, with great cost and peril of their lives," and Tyndale, who sought to put the Scripture within the reach of the English plowboy. Every consideration of inward character, historical precedent, and philological propriety demands that the New Testament be kept continually in the vernacular of the day. In that it was written, and at that its first translators aimed. Toward that its modern translators, with sound historical, literary, and religious sense, are now striving. From the aim of the revisers who sought for English expressions as old as King James or even older, and whose diction is sometimes actually

more archaic than his, the new philology has recalled modern scholars to the purpose of the makers of the King James Version, who sought to make an English Bible that should be understood by the common people.

As one surveys the history of modern translations from the days of Tyndale, one is struck with the accuracy with which interest in making them reflects the state of English religion. They began in the stirring dawn of the Reformation. Tyndale's New Testament of 1525 he himself revised in 1534 and 1535; Coverdale republished it in 1535, and Rogers in 1537; Taverner and Coverdale again revised it in 1539. A second period of revision began in 1557, which culminated in the King James Bible of 1611. It was itself almost immediately somewhat revised, and would have been more thoroughly, had not the Commonwealth given way to the Restoration. Then ensues the one barren period in English history since Tyndale, in the matter of interest in revising the Bible. But with the revival of religion in the eighteenth century, renewed interest is shown, in the numerous private revisions and translations, and this has continued ever since. Slackened a little by the English Revision of 1881, of which so much was expected, it has

since, under the influence of the discovery and understanding of the papyri, accelerated and strengthened, until we now see two and three new translations appearing in a single year. They reflect a serious purpose widely held to bring the meaning of the book nearer to the modern reader, and to release if possible a little more of the extraordinary dynamic that resides in it. The modern age is not indifferent to the New Testament. No age was ever less so. On the contrary, it is eager to bear its testimony to the present religious value of the New Testament.

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